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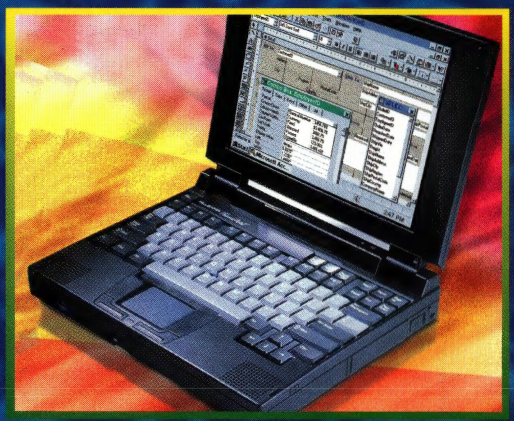

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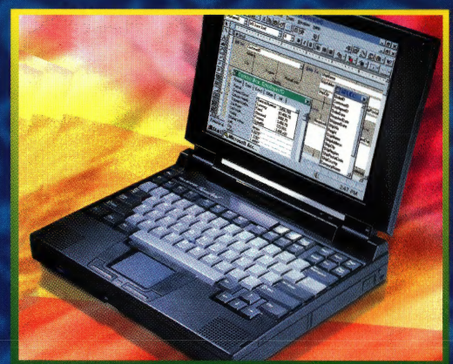

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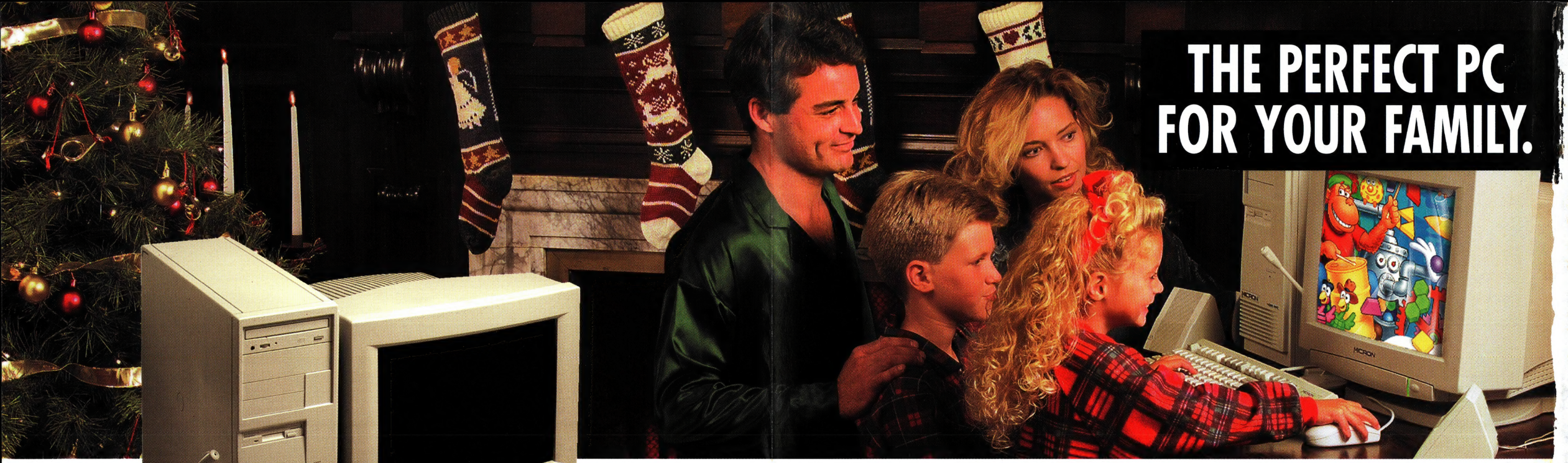

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intel inside pentium PROCESSOR

Micron Electronics offers another excellent choice this Christmas. In fact, the **Micron Millennia**™ **P166** recently won the prestigious ***PC Magazine* Editors' Choice**®. The Millennia features 512KB pipeline cache and now comes standard equipped with a **64-bit video card boasting a huge 4MB of EDO RAM** with MPEG and 3D support. That means you'll have all the speed and power to run your favorite games and applications with optimum performance. And believe it or not, we've doubled memory while keeping prices competitive, making the Millennia an outstanding, value-packed system.

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— *Family PC, May 1996*

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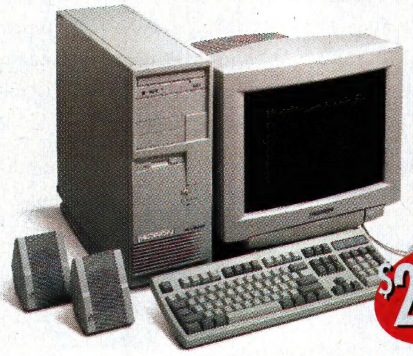

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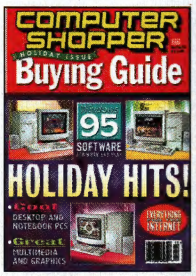
Welcome

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Family Values

This year's Buying Guide is an extension of our mission here at *Computer Shopper*. As the leading publication for the mail-order market, our goal each month is to help business and home PC users locate the best computer products and values. But since the holiday season is a time spent with family and friends, we decided to pay close attention in this special issue to PC applications in the home.



Signposts for the coming year point to even greater integration in the home.

Of course, that decision also reflects the PC's widening appeal to mainstream users—from Win 95's intuitive interface and Plug and Play architecture to new convergence products, such as Gateway 2000's Destination, which marries full-range computer capabilities with the audio/video performance of a home entertainment system. And the signposts for the coming year point to even greater integration in the home through new innovations such as DVD and the Universal Serial Bus (USB).

Progress can be confusing, however. Whether you're in the market for a new PC or looking to upgrade your current system, it's easy to get overwhelmed by the incredible selection of new products and the lightning-quick pace of computer technology. How do you discern the cutting edge from a flash in the pan? Relax—you've got *Shopper* on your side.

In the following pages, you'll find essential information and buying tips from *Shopper*'s expert team of writers and editors in a number of different categories, including desktop and notebook computers; 3-D graphics cards; scanners; printers; and multimedia software, utilities, and games. All the content is brand-new and written specifically for this guide. Likewise, our hardware charts have been updated to include the latest models and most current prices. In addition, we'll tell you how to shop the direct channel to consistently get the best deals on the hottest PC products.

So skip the trip to the mall this year. Go direct for your PC products instead.

Steven Schwartz
Editor, Buying Guide

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[1996 Buying Guide]

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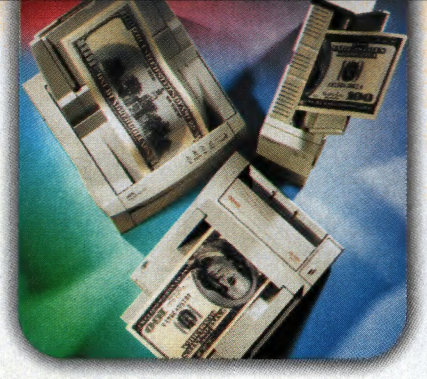

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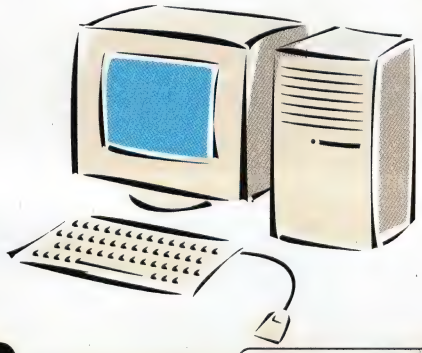
LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Shoppers, Happy Holidays from all of us at Computer Shopper!

If you're like most buyers during this season, you're struggling to find the best values on PC products in the market. You know that this is the time each year that the hottest products are introduced and the state of the art becomes even more affordable than in the past. Your challenge is to find vendors that have these innovative products in stock and that can ship in a reasonable time frame. Chances are you have been disappointed with the selection and availability of the hottest products at your local retail store.

That is why it's smart to select *Computer Shopper*'s Holiday Guide as your shopping companion. There's no better source of what's available in the PC market than *Computer Shopper*—no easier way to shop than through the direct channel's premier vendors. Instead of waiting in line or getting blank stares from retail clerks, you can browse among multiple vendors right from your home or office. Ordering is as easy as dialing your telephone.



The articles in this special issue are your tickets to timely advice from the most knowledgeable writers and editors in the business, people with impartial answers to challenging questions. Is this the right time to upgrade your monitor or hard drive? How about putting a P200 or Cyrix 6x86 system under the tree? What's the road to the top in multimedia for the kids? Which of the snazzy new notebooks on the market will best suit your business? What's the buzz on the latest in printers, scanners, and software? *Shopper*'s editorial team has the just-in-time information to point you in the right direction and help you make an informed buying decision.

Each month nearly two million buyers find *Computer Shopper* an incredible tool for locating the products that they need from vendors that are savvy and service-oriented. We're proud to showcase some of the finest companies in the PC market each month, particularly in this special issue. We know you'll find everything on your wish list by paging through our Holiday Guide.

Happy holidays and happy shopping. Thanks again for your patronage.

Al DiGuido
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New 12X and 10X CD-ROM also available.

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- 2.5GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 8X EIDE CD-ROM & 3.5" Diskette Drive
- Matrox 4MB WRAM PCI Graphic Accelerator
- Professional PS785 17" DiamondTron NI LR Monitor 1600x1200 .25mm stripe pitch with On Screen Display
- 33.6 v.34 DSVD PnP Fax/Modem (Internet Ready)
- Professional EZ Full Tower Case w/300W Power Supply
- Microsoft® Natural Keyboard & Microsoft Mouse
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- Microsoft Office Professional v. 7.0
- Free Software (Quicken, Presentation & Internet Access)

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- Pentium Pro System Board with Intel 82441FX PCIset
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- PCI 64-bit Video w/MPEG & 2MB EDO RAM
- AT&T 15" NI LR Monitor .28mm dot pitch
- 33.6 v.34 DSVD Fax/Modem (Internet Ready)
- Professional EZ ATX Tower Case w/250W Power Supply
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- 32MB EDO DRAM
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- 8X EIDE CD-ROM & 3.5" Diskette Drive
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- Professional PS785 17" DiamondTron NI LR Monitor 1600x1200 .25mm stripe pitch with On Screen Display
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- PCI 64-bit Video w/MPEG & 2MB EDO RAM
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- Professional EZ Med. Tower Case w/230W Power Supply
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120MHz ***$1,769***

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- Intel 82430HX PCIset
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- 512K Pipelined Burst Cache
- 2.0GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 8X EIDE CD-ROM & 3.5" Diskette Drive
- PCI 64-bit Video w/MPEG & 2MB EDO RAM
- AT&T® 15" NI Monitor .28mm dot pitch
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- Professional EZ Med. Tower Case w/230W Power Supply
- 104-Key Keyboard & MS Mouse
- Microsoft Windows 95 SR2 CD
- Microsoft Office Professional v. 7.0 CD
- Lotus SmartSuite 96 CD (Optional)
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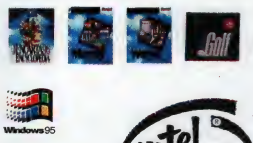

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Home Plus

- Intel Pentium® Processor
- Intel 82430HX PCIset
- 16MB EDO DRAM
- 512K Pipelined Burst Cache
- 2.0GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 8X EIDE CD-ROM & 3.5" Diskette Drive
- PCI 64-bit Video w/MPEG & 2MB EDO RAM
- Professional PS716SL 17" NI LR Monitor .28mm dot pitch
- Wavetable Sound Card w/Mic. & Headphone
- Amplified Speakers w/AC Adapter
- 33.6 v.34 DSVD PnP Fax/Modem (Internet Ready)
- Professional EZ Med. Tower Case w/230W Power Supply
- 104-Key Keyboard & MS-Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows 95 SR2 CD
- Microsoft Family CD Bundle
- Lotus® SmartSuite 96 CD (Optional)
- Free Software (Quicken, Presentation & Internet Access)

Pentium Processor

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150MHz **$1,739**
133MHz **$1,689**
120MHz **$1,639**

Home PC

- Intel Pentium Processor
- Intel 82430HX PCIset
- 16MB EDO DRAM
- 512K Pipelined Burst Cache
- 1.6GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 8X EIDE CD-ROM & 3.5" Diskette Drive
- PCI 64-bit Video w/MPEG & 2MB EDO RAM
- AT&T® 15" NI LR Monitor .28mm dot pitch
- Wavetable Sound Card w/Mic. & Headphone
- Amplified Speakers w/AC Adapter
- 33.6 v.34 DSVD PnP Fax/Modem (Internet Ready)
- Professional EZ Med. Tower Case w/230W Power Supply
- 104-Key Keyboard & MS Mouse
- Microsoft Windows 95 SR2 CD
- Microsoft Family CD Bundle
- Lotus SmartSuite 96 CD (Optional)
- Free Software (Quicken, Presentation & Internet Access)

Pentium Processor

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133MHz **$1,469**
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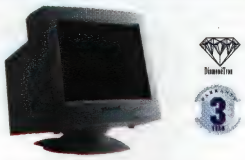

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Dot/Strip Pitch	0.25mm sp	0.26mm dp	0.25mm sp
Bandwidth	120MHz	100MHz	120MHz
Horiz. Frequency	24-82KHz	30-65KHz	24-82KHz
1280x1024 (75Hz)	Yes	No	Yes
1024x768 (85Hz)	Yes	No	Yes

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- Microsoft® Windows® 95 SR2 CD
- Lotus® SmartSuite® 96 CD
- Free Software(Quicken, Presentation & Internet Access)

Pentium Processor

166MHz ***$1,399***
150MHz ***$1,299***
133MHz ***$1,249***
120MHz ***$1,199***

3D Game PC

- Intel Pentium Processor
- Intel 82430HX PCIset
- 16MB EDO DRAM
- 512K Pipelined Burst Cache
- 1.6GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 8X EIDE CD-ROM & 3.5" Diskette Drive
- 3D Sound/Video Card w/MPEG & 2MB DRAM
- AT&T® 15" NI Monitor .28mm
- Wavetable Sound Card
- Subwoofer Amplified Speakers w/Game Pad, Mic. & Headphone
- 33.6 v.34 DSVD PnP Fax/Modem (Internet Ready)
- Professional EZ Med. Tower Case w/230W PS
- 104-Key Keyboard & MS Mouse
- Microsoft Windows 95 SR2 CD
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Pentium Processor

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133MHz ***$1,619***
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Professional gamers need rump-stomping 3D graphics and chest-pounding sound. That's why the 3D Game PC is the ultimate gamester's PC. No more slo-mo flak bursts--our accelerated 3D graphics card offers prime graphics performance with 2MB DRAM. It's also MIDI compatible, supports Direct X APIs and up to 120MHz refresh, too many cool features to list. 'Way dude, it even plays SegaSaturn™ games under Windows 95! Two speakers plus a separate subwoofer hit those realistic lows so you'll know when it's all over. Full motion video? With our eight speed CD-ROM and MPEG accelerator, it's a snap. Comes with SegaSaturn-style game pad and Sega games, mic, and headphones. Our 3D ultimate game machine gets the work out too, with a 1.6GB EIDE hard drive, 33.6 modem for fast online cruising or head-to-head dueling--even (yuck) educational software.

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- Intel® Pentium® 120MHz
- 12.1" DSTN Passive Matrix Display
- Synchronous 256K L2 Cache
- 16MB EDO RAM
- 6X CD-ROM & 1.44MB Floppy Drive
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- PCI Bus 128-bit Graphics Processor (MPEG-1) w/1.5MB EDO Video RAM
- Built-in Creative® Vibra Stereo Sound Card w/Spkrs. & Mic.
- Touchpad Pointing Device
- Two Type II or one Type III PCMCIA slots
- 84-key Windows 95 Keyboard
- 11.69" W x 8.97" x D x 1.88H
- 6.6 lbs. with FDD
- 1 EPP/ECP parallel Port
- 1 UART 16550 Serial Port
- Game/Midi Port & External Monitor Port
- PS/2 Keyboard or Mouse Port
- Windows 95 SR2 CD

Pentium Processor

120MHz ***$2,499***

P930T

- Intel Pentium 133MHz
- 21.1" TFT Active Matrix Display
- Synchronous 256K L2 Cache
- 16MB EDO RAM
- 6X CD-ROM & 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 1.0GB Hard Drive
- PCI Bus 128-bit Graphics Processor (MPEG-1) w/1.5MB EDO Video RAM
- Built-in Creative® Vibra Stereo Sound Card w/Spkrs. & Mic.
- Touchpad Pointing Device
- Two Type II or one Type III PCMCIA slots
- 84-key Windows 95 Keyboard
- 11.69" W x 8.97" x D x 1.88H
- 6.6 lbs. with FDD
- 1 EPP/ECP parallel Port
- 1 UART 16550 Serial Port
- Game/Midi Port & External Monitor Port
- PS/2 Keyboard or Mouse Port
- Windows 95 SR2 CD

Pentium Processor

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4MB X 32 - 70NS SIMMS	111
4MB X 32 - 60NS EDO SIMMS	112
4MB X 32 - 70NS EDO SIMMS	114
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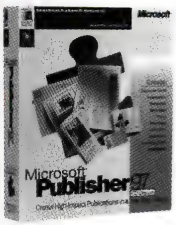

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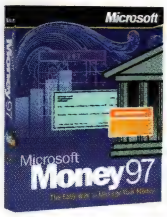

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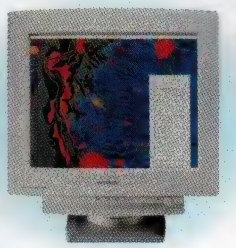

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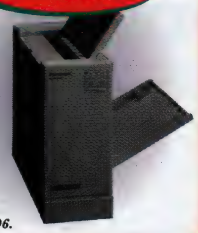

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EZ135 135MB IDE internal	119.23
EZ135 135MB SCSI external	119.23
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EZ135 135MB cartridge	19.59
EZFlyer 230MB SCSI external	291.47
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ADS TV Superscan 2 PC to TV converter	291.13
Connectix QuickCam for Windows	97.36
Connectix Color QuickCam for Windows	222.72
EXP 8X CD w/game port PCMCIA	733.30
EXP 8X CD w/sound module PCMCIA	859.51
Microsolutions 4X CD parallel	219.67
Microsolutions 6X CD w/sound parallel	357.76
Microsolutions 8X CD parallel	337.55
NEC 4x4 4X CD 4-disc changer internal	99.00
NEC 4Xc 4X CD 7-disc changer external	349.75

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NEC 6Xi 6X CD internal	243.82
NEC 6Xe 6X CD external	335.65
NEC 8V 8X CD internal IDE	152.65
NEC 8Xi 8X CD internal SCSI-2	323.72
NEC 8Xe 8X CD external SCSI-2	449.51
Panasonic portable 4X CD SCSI	399.00
Sony portable 4X CD Discman®	346.43
SunMoonStar 8X CD internal IDE/ATAPI	135.24
SunMoonStar 8X CD portable	271.88

INPUT DEVICES

Alps Desktop GlidePoint	66.86
Alps GlidePoint Windows 95 keyboard	95.58
Calcomp Drawing Slate II 6x9 w/pressure pen	195.34
Calcomp Drawing Slate II 12x12 w/pressure pen	217.66
Epson PhotoPC digital camera	399.00
Epson ActionScanning System II	376.41
Epson ES1000C color scanner	572.37
Epson ES1200C Pro color scanner	1126.60
Hewlett Packard ScanJet 4s	198.41
Hewlett Packard ScanJet 4p	499.90
Hewlett Packard ScanJet 4c	857.90
Kodak DC20 Digital Science Camera	299.00
Kodak DC40 Digital Science Camera	599.00
Kodak DC50 Digital Science Camera	899.00
Logitech MouseMan 96	53.70
Logitech Cordless MouseMan	67.44
Logitech TrackMan Marble	83.23
Logitech TrackMan Live! cordless pointer	116.69
Logitech PageScan color scanner	277.32
Microtek PageWiz compact scanner	98.17
Microtek ScanMaker E3 color flatbed	309.26
Microtek ScanMaker E6 std. color flatbed	556.72
Play Snappy video still capture	195.97
Umax Vista-S6E SOHO scanner	311.15
Umax Vista-S-12 scanner	759.05
Visioneer PaperPort Vx scanner	277.21
Visioneer PaperPort ix scanner	317.44

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Mag Innovision DX1595 PnP 15" .28mm	349.28
Mag Innovision DX1795 PnP 17" .26mm	612.61
Mag Innovision DX15T 15" .26mm	394.49
Mag Innovision DX17T 17" .26mm	702.05
Mag Innovision MXP17F 17" .26mm	713.22
Mag Innovision MX21F 21" .28mm	1531.16
Magnavox CM2099 14" .28mm	248.84
Magnavox CM2015 15" .28mm	299.87
Magnavox CM1215 15" .28mm	341.37
Magnavox CM4018 17" .28mm	599.50
Magnavox 20CM64 20" .31mm	849.00
NEC XV15+ 15" .28mm	473.13
NEC M500 15" .25mm	478.81
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NEC XE21 21" .28mm	1682.67
NEC XP21 21" .28mm	1943.57
Samsung 17GLi 17" .28mm	759.00
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Sony Multiscan 17sell 17" PnP .25mm	976.41
Sony Multiscan 20sfII 20" PnP .30mm	1637.63
ViewSonic 15GSIII 15" .27mm	384.78

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ViewSonic G810 21" .25mm	1507.01
ViewSonic P810 21" .25mm	1582.36
ViewSonic P815 21" .25mm	1879.29
ViewSonic PT810 21" .30mm	1634.27

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ATI Graphics Xpression PCI 2MB	93.68
ATI Graphics Xpression ISA 2MB	95.41
ATI Graphics Pro Turbo PCI 2MB	175.28
ATI Graphics Pro Turbo PCI 4MB	268.42
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Diamond Stealth64 2120 PCI 1MB	75.11
Diamond Stealth64 Video 3240XL PCI 2MB	223.72
Matrox Millennium PCI 2MB WRAM	182.31
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Intel OverDrive Pentium 120/133MHz upg for 5/60, 5/66	253.45
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Intel OverDrive Pentium 166MHz upg for 5/100	456.23

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3Com Etherlink IIIC	135.44
3Com Etherlink III 28.8 Enet 10BT	414.30
Adaptec APA1460 SCSI-2	152.76
Hayes EZJack V.34 33.6 w/fax	225.38
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Megahertz 28.8 V.34 data/fax w/ XJACK	259.96
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- 410CDT 5/90 8MB 772MB 11.3" active 4X CD ... 2741.54
- 420CDS 5/100 8MB 810MB 11.3" dual 6X CD ... 2475.78
- 420CDT 5/100 8MB 1.26GB 11.3" active 6X CD ... 3348.49

Portege Notebooks
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- 620CT 5/100 8MB 1.2GB 10.4" active ... 2431.79
- 650CT 5/133 16MB 1.26GB 11.3" active ... 4339.19

Tecra Notebooks
- 500CS 5/120 16MB 1.26GB 12.1" dual ... 3539.69
- 500CDT 5/120 16MB 1.26GB 12.1" active 6X CD ... 4519.30
- 720CDT 5/133 16MB 1.13GB 12.1" active 6X CD ... 5289.11
- 730CDT 5/150 16MB 2GB 12.1" active 6X CD ... 5996.81

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Ascentia Notebooks
- A41 5/120 16MB 1GB 11.3" dual 6X CD ... 2499.00
- A42 5/120 16MB 1GB 12.1" active 6X CD ... 3199.00
- J10 5/75 8MB 500MB 10.4" dual ... 1661.88
- J20 5/100 8MB 540MB 11.3" dual ... 1642.82
- J20 5/100 8MB 800MB 11.3" dual ... 1721.03
- J30 5/100 8MB 800MB 10.4" dual ... 1859.06
- J30 5/100 8MB 800MB 10.4" active ... 2139.88
- J50 5/133 8MB 800MB 10.4" active ... 2514.56
- P30 5/100 8MB 800MB 11.3" dual 4X CD ... 2298.42
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- P40 5/120 16MB 2.1GB 11.3" active 6X CD ... 3751.44
- P50 5/133 8MB 800MB 11.3" active 4X CD ... 3367.72
- P50 5/133 8MB 1.2GB 11.3" active 4X CD ... 3647.10
- P50 5/133 24MB 1GB 12.1" active 6X CD ... 3938.79
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- 9308 5/166 24MB 2.5GB 8X CD ... 2073.30
- 9314 5/200 24MB 4GB 8X CD ... 2542.75

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- LC 5100 5/100 16MB 1.2GB ... 1221.30
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- LC 5133 5/133 16MB 1.2GB ... 1322.61
- LC 5166 5/166 16MB 1.2GB ... 1542.13
- MS 5100 5/100 16MB 1.2GB ... 1257.32
- MS 5100 5/100 16MB 2.1GB ... 1368.09
- MS 5133 5/133 16MB 1.2GB ... 1389.25
- MS 5133 5/133 16MB 2.1GB ... 1501.03
- MS 5166 5/166 16MB 2.1GB 6X CD ... 1853.14

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- MS-T 5100 5/100 16MB 2.1GB ... 1423.49
- MS-T 5133 5/133 16MB 1.2GB ... 1445.63
- MS-T 5133 5/133 16MB 2.1GB ... 1556.41

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- 1120T 5/100 8MB 810MB 10.4" active ... 2249.00
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- 4110D 5/100 8MB 810MB 11.3" dual ... 2899.00
- 4120 5/120 16MB 1.08GB 11.3" dual ... 3099.00
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- 5150 5/100 8MB 810MB 11.3" dual ... 2889.00
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- 5250 5/120 16MB 810MB 10.4" active ... 3649.00
- 5280 5/120 16MB 1.35GB 11.3" active ... 4429.00
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- 5120/1200 5/120 16MB 1.2GB ... 1499.00
- 5133/1200 5/133 16MB 1.2GB ... 1659.00
- 5133/2500 5/133 16MB 2.5GB ... 1859.00
- 5166/1200 5/166 16MB 1.2GB ... 1969.00
- 5166/2500 5/166 16MB 2.5GB ... 2169.00
- 5200/2500 5/200 32MB 2.5GB ... 2769.00
- 6180/1200/CD 6/180 16MB 1.2GB 8X CD ... 2549.00
- 6200/2500/CD 6/200 16MB 2.5GB 8X CD ... 3159.00

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- 4122 5/150 16MB 2.5GB 8X CD ... 1899.00
- 4402 5/133 16MB 1.6GB 6X CD built-in 15" monitor ... 1999.00

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- 8702 5/166 24MB 2.5GB 8X CD ... 2499.00
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- 365XD 5/120 8MB 810MB 10.4" active 4X CD ... 2622.49
- 365XD 5/120 8MB 1.08GB 11.3" dual 4X CD ... 2564.20
- 365XD 5/120 8MB 1.08GB 10.4" active 4X CD ... 2849.07
- 365XD 5/133 8MB 1.35GB 11.3" active 6X CD ... 3393.72
- 560 5/100 8MB 810MB 11.3" dual ... 2763.97
- 560 5/120 8MB 810MB 12.1" active ... 3745.64
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- 760ED 5/133 16MB 1.2GB 12.1" active 4X CD ... 7104.62
- 760ED 5/133 16MB 2.1GB 12.1" active 6X CD ... 6089.68
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- 760EL 5/100 8MB 810MB 11.3" dual ... 3206.62
- 760ELD 5/100 8MB 810MB 12.1" active 4X CD ... 4599.82
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- 760EL 5/120 8MB 1.08GB 12.1" active ... 4392.50
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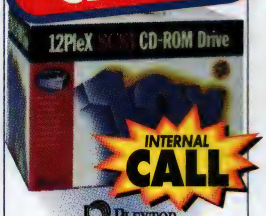

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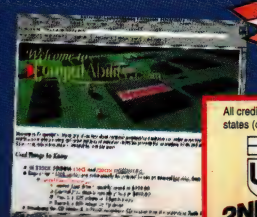

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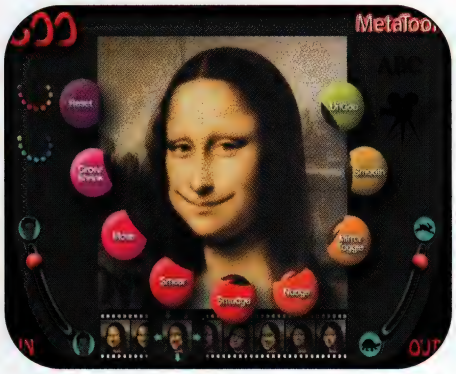
By Steven Schwartz



KAI'S POWER GOO

Stretch your imagination—and your digital pictures—with Kai's Power Goo from MetaTools (805-566-6200). Priced at about $49.95, this amazing software supports all popular image formats and lets you manipulate pictures on your Macintosh or Windows 95 PC with results similar to the morphing effects seen in the recent Eddie Murphy film *The Nutty Professor.*

With Power Goo, you can smear, smudge, stretch, and fuse images in real time, without any of the intricacies inherent in most conventional image-editing software. When you've completed "gooing" your subject, place the images on the Keyframe Palette and output the transformation as a proprietary GOOvie, AVI, or QuickTime movie for distribution on floppy or via e-mail.

This is one item guaranteed to put a smile on everyone's face this holiday season (and if it doesn't happen naturally, you can always "goo" it in.) ▼

Quicktel II 33X-SP-C

It may look as strange as its name, but the Quicktel II 33X-SP-C from

Logicode (800-735-6442) is everything you could possibly want in a 33.6Kbps fax modem. Packed inside this colorful case is a full-duplex speakerphone with a built-in microphone and speaker, DSP-controlled

Fuji Photo Film Print-it

Looking for a printer capable of reproducing your digitized photos in living color? Then check out the Print-it personal photographic print maker from Fuji Photo Film U.S.A. (800-378-3854). This $599-estimated device uses professional photographic paper and lets you print pictures from either your PC or any video source (including camcorders, TVs, and VCRs). It also comes bundled with all the necessary video cables and Windows drivers—as well as a copy of Adobe's Photo Deluxe software for adding text or touching up your photos.

Although designed primarily for use in the home, the Print-it is completely portable, weighing in at only 5.5 pounds and measuring 3x10x12 inches (HWD). Maximum printing resolution from a PC is 480x728 dots in 24-bit color.

What truly separates the Print-it from the color-printer pack is that it doesn't require inks, toner, or ribbons. Instead, it uses Fuji's proprietary Thermo-Autochrome system in which cyan, magenta, and yellow color dyes are layered into the printing paper. You will, however, need to use Fuji's special post-card-size paper, which is available in packages of 20 sheets at $15 estimated. But for professional-quality pictures and a chemical-free environment, it's a fair compromise. ▼

acoustic and telephone-line echo cancellation, Group 3-compatible 14.4Kbps fax capability, and a password-protected voice-mail answering system.

Priced at $249.95-estimated, the Quicktel II is also Plug and Play-compliant under Windows 95 for simple hassle-free installation. One of its more unusual features is its adjustable, backlit 16-character LCD display, which has been programmed to relay more than 100 status-indicating messages in simple sentences.

The built-in speaker and microphone, meanwhile, both eliminate the need for connections to your PC's sound card, and feature automatic gain control (AGC) circuitry, so you don't have to go nose-to-nose with the Quicktel II in order to speak to and hear other parties. The unit even supports Radish's VoiceView alternating voice-data protocol when used with optional software. Last, but not least, it offers an easy-to-reach power switch.

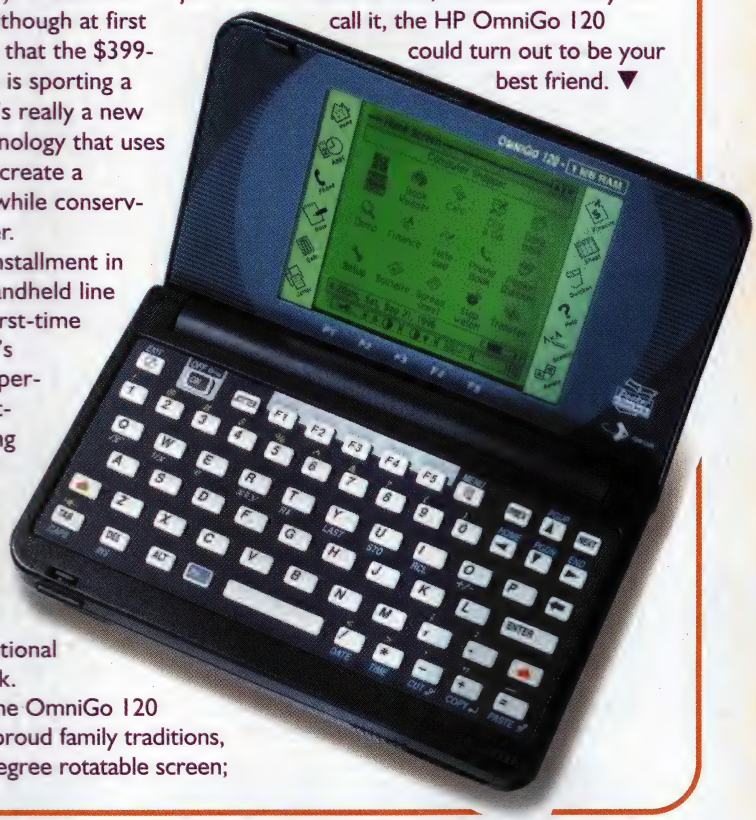
In other words, though this modem looks snazzy, it's what's under the hood that really counts.▼

HP OmniGo 120 Plus

The folks at Hewlett-Packard (800-637-7740) prefer to think of the new HP OmniGo 120 as a personal organizer, not a PDA (personal digital assistant). Whatever. We just think it's neat. Although at first glance it appears that the $399-estimated device is sporting a backlit screen, it's really a new holographic technology that uses available light to create a brighter display while conserving battery power.

This latest installment in HP's OmniGo handheld line also signals the first-time addition of Intuit's Pocket Quicken personal finance software. Also making its debut are the new Clip & Go transfer utilities, which let users send data to a PC when used with the optional Connectivity Pack.

Of course, the OmniGo 120 carries on some proud family traditions, including a 360-degree rotatable screen; pen and keyboard entry; three data input options, password protection; and note-jotter, appointment/address/telephone book, spreadsheet, and calculator functions. In fact, no matter what you call it, the HP OmniGo 120 could turn out to be your best friend. ▼



STEVEN SPIELBERG'S DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Have you ever wondered what it takes to turn out a Hollywood movie? Well, you'll get your chance in Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair, a movie-making simulation game from Knowledge Adventure (818-246-4400).

For his debut on disc, the creator of such blockbuster hits as *ET* and *Jurassic Park* has decided to let you make all the important calls—from creating the script to marketing the finished film. Spielberg himself plays the part of the virtual mentor who guides you through the process. There's also a great supporting cast that includes some big-name talent such as Jennifer Aniston of NBC's "Friends," director/actor Quentin Tarantino, and illusionists Penn and Teller.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

Spread out over three discs, the game features more than 100 minutes of original footage shot by Spielberg specifically for the project. You begin playing at the Novice level, where you learn the ropes of studio operations and begin preproduction on the movie. As you advance on to the Intermediate and Advanced stages, you face mounting challenges—including coordinating stunts, adding special effects, and composing a score.

The game concludes with a red-carpet screening of your film at the Premiere Theater, where you get to mingle with other A-list Hollywood players. You can even distribute your movie on floppy disk or via the Internet to friends unable to attend the premiere.

Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair will be available this month in Windows and Macintosh versions at an estimated price of $54.95. ▼

Creatures

They may look like simple animations, but Creatures, sold by Inscape (310-312-5705), are in fact incredibly sophisticated artificial life-form simulations that actually "live" inside your PC. Developed by U.K.-based Millennium Interactive, the program uses a neural network that simulates the human brain and "digital DNA," letting these amazing beings behave and develop with real-life unpredictability.

Six eggs are provided on the Creatures CD-ROM. Once hatched, the organisms dwell in an environment approximately 12 screens wide by three screens high, which contains about 40 objects designed to provide the creatures with the tools they need to survive.

Owners can monitor the health of their silicon pets on screens that display hormonal states, dietary concerns, and emotional well-being. Of course, much depends on the user's interaction with the creatures, particularly how well they are taught to understand their world. Given proper care, these animated animals are capable of an impressive range of behavior—including communication (they groan, cry, and can even learn a rudimentary language in their preadolescent stage, which takes place one to five hours into the program), and... ahem... reproduction.

Sadly, like their carbon-based counterparts, the creatures have a limited lifespan (about 40 hours of game play) before they die of old age, eat poisonous plants, or become a meal for the hungry "Grendels." But then, artificial life goes on as successive generations of creatures evolve with specific traits passed on through the magical strands of digital DNA.

Creatures is currently available for Windows PCs at an estimated price of $40. A Macintosh version is expected soon. ▼

Redshift 2 Gift Set

Add a bit of cosmic karma to the holidays with Maris Multimedia's RedShift2 Gift Set (distributed by Maxis, 800-336-2947). This deluxe bundle brings together Maris's celebrated RedShift2 astronomy CD-ROM, The Discovery Channel's "Stargazers" video, and Jean-Paul Garatoni's

designed for no-holds-barred gameplay and overall high computing performance. Respectively equipped with P166 and P200 processors, both systems feature a laundry list of top-flight components, starting with 32MB of EDO RAM and dual 3-D acceleration (provided by an ATI 3D Rage graphics accelerator chip on the motherboard and a dedicated Diamond Monster 3D PCI card, which is based upon the 3Dfx Voodoo chip) with a total of 6MB of DRAM.

The high-powered visuals are complimented by the wall-rattling output of the system's 16-bit wavetable sound card with SRS 3-D stereo surround and Advent's 50-watt "wedge" speakers and subwoofer. The PowerPlayer also keeps disc-swapping to a minimum thanks to NEC's new Multispin 6x4, a 6x four-disc CD-ROM changer.

Rounding out the package is a 2.56GB (2010) or 3.2GB (2020) hard disk, 33.6Kbps fax/data/voice modem, two Gravis Grip gamepads, a Thrustmaster Flight Control System joystick, and a game bundle consisting of 11 full titles including MechWarrior II 3D, VR Soccer, Wing Commander IV, WipeOut, and You Don't Know Jack—plus shareware versions of four more games. Prices start at $2,899 for the PowerPlayer 2010 and $3,299 for the 2020. ▼

NEC POWERPLAYER PC

Gamers whose greatest challenges come when they hit their systems' limitations would do well to check out the new PowerPlayer PC from NEC (800-632-4636). Presently available in two configurations, the 2010 and 2020, the PowerPlayer is

RedShift Suite audio CD—all for just $54.95. RedShift2 alone normally sells for $49.95.

Your Windows PC or Mac is the launch site for the CD-ROM's 10 animated tours through the universe, 3-D simulations of orbiting planets, and 700-plus full-screen photos of nearby and distant heavenly bodies. Then fire up your VCR, pop in "Stargazers," and relive 100 years of space exploration at the Lowell Observatory (named for Percival Lowell, who stirred up the populace in the 1890s by declaring that strange markings on Mars were created by an advanced civilization). Finally, cap off your trip with Garatoni's space-age symphony on the audio CD. Talk about celestial convergence! ▼

Microsoft SideWinder Game Pad

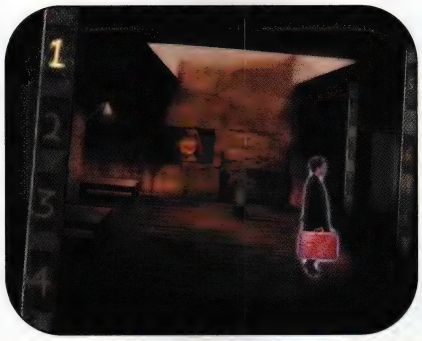
If you like your PC gaming action fast and furious—and who doesn't?—the SideWinder Game Pad from Microsoft (800-426-9400) will take you where you want to go at whatever speeds you can muster. Priced at about $39, this slickly designed, dual-handled device provides everything you need to kick, shoot, steer, punch, and pilot your way to victory, including six control buttons, an eight-way controller, and two rear-mounted triggers (for left and right index fingers).

The included Game Customizer software for Windows 95 lets you program up to eight multibutton combinations (one per button) for lightning-quick responses. You can also daisy-chain up to four SideWinders for multiplayer contests. The SideWinder even supports hot-plugging, which means you can connect additional devices without having to restart your system. Air strike, anyone? ▼

EVE--1

It's been three years since Peter Gabriel rocked the PC world with his multimedia debut, Xplora 1. Now Gabriel is back with Eve, a journey into an immersive universe of art, music, and intrigue.

Eve, which runs on Windows 95 and Macintosh platforms, is divided into four separate "worlds"—Mud, Foliage, Industrial, and Paradise. Some players may stumble into a fifth world, Ruin, between Industrial and Paradise. The goal is to help Gabriel return to Paradise, which is accomplished by exploring the disc's wondrous 360-degree landscapes and solving its fascinating puzzles. Although this is essentially a game, it's definitely not kid stuff. Much of Eve is devoted to examining mature themes such as love, sex, and love lost.



All in all, it's a breathtaking experience that combines previously unreleased versions of four Gabriel songs with cerebral artwork by Helen Chadwick, Cathy de Monchaux, Yayoi Kusama, and Nils Udo. It can also be a lot of fun, particularly the appropriately dubbed Interactive Music Experience, which lets you combine various elements of Gabriel's music while creating your own video performances.

Eve is available for $39.95 from StarWave (800-457-8646). ▼

miroMedia 3D Upgrade Kit

Many users are probably seeking an integrated solution to running 2-D/3-D graphics and video acceleration, high-quality sound, telephony, and radio/TV applications on Windows 95 PCs. miro Computer Products (800-474-6476) recently introduced its miroMedia concept, in which all of these capabilities are controlled via a single, easy-to-learn software interface, dubbed the miroMedia manager.

Expected just in time for the holidays, the miroMedia 3D Upgrade Kit pictured here marries the company's first installments in the new line—the miroMedia 3D and miroMedia 3D Surround card—with Stereographic's SimulEyes 3D Eyewear at a $399-list.

Based on S3's ViRGE chip, the miroMedia 3D offers a built-in NTSC output that lets users substitute their PC monitor for a TV. The card additionally supports refresh rates up to 120Hz (at a maximum 640x480 resolution). When used with the SimulEyes Eyewear, this reduces potentially annoying flicker to imperceptible levels. The miroMedia 3D Surround, meanwhile, operates with any existing PC sound card to create Dolby Pro Logic surround sound (even, it is claimed, with two speakers).

Coming attractions for the miroMedia line include a TV/radio card and a wireless remote control. ▼

OUTPRICE!

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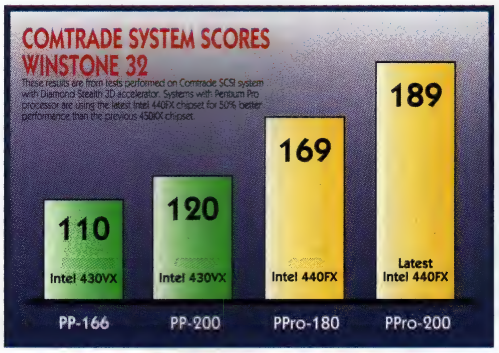

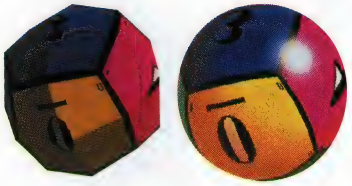

2-D ⇨ 3-D

See the difference! The two spheres shown above are actually made with the same number of polygons – the one on the right uses proprietary curve-based polygon rendering technology, which gives a more accurate image, found in the Diamond Stealth 3-D graphics accelerator in every Comtrade 3-D system.

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PCs COME HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Celebrate the season with a new multimedia PC.

Mail-order shopping can make buying a new computer as simple as ordering a burger, but some consumers fear getting lost in an à la carte menu. For first-timers, buying a home PC is like navigating a silicon sea of processor speeds, RAM and storage configurations, monitor sizes and resolutions, graphics- and sound-card options, CD-ROM drives, software bundles, warranty and support policies, and of course, prices.

Not to worry. If you take time to organize the task logically, it's easy to end up with the best system for your needs. The simplest strategy is to rely on four basic criteria: features, performance, support, and price.

The first and arguably biggest decision every computer buyer makes is which operating system to choose. If you haven't already committed to the PC architecture and Microsoft Windows, you might want to consider Apple's Macintosh Performa or one of Power Computing's capable Mac clones. But the stampede to Windows software (along with IBM's quiet retreat on the home front for OS/2 Warp) leaves Windows 95 the multimedia-PC favorite.

Win 95's industrial-strength sibling, Windows NT Workstation, is a rising star for corporate desktops using Intel's high-end Pentium Pro. But NT's incompatibility with popular games and plug-and-play peripherals makes Windows 95 a more likely choice for home or home-office computing.

Picking Out the Pieces

The best way to optimize any PC's life expectancy is by spending generously on components likely to last the lifetime of the machine, particularly items such as monitors and hard drives. A 15-inch display and 1GB hard disk are today's minimum requirements, while 17-inch monitors and 2GB drives are solid mainstream choices.

If you intend to keep important business or household documents on your PC, you may also want to consider a high-capacity backup device such as a Travan tape drive, a CD-Recordable drive, or a removable-cartridge drive like SyQuest's SyJet or Iomega's Jaz.

Both for cool multimedia programs and to install other programs, a CD-ROM drive is essential. At present, 6x and 8x models are the most cost-effective choices. The higher through put of a 10x or 12x drive may offer marginally quicker software loads or smoother full-screen video playback, but its extra cost is hard to justify, especially since a year from now you'll probably be tempted by CD-ROM's successor, a DVD drive. (See the sidebar "Coming Attractions.")

Most CD players give you what you pay for. A bargain-basement 8x drive may offer average access times no quicker than those of a good 4x unit.

Remember that multimedia applications run considerably faster with a graphics accelerator capable of speeding 2-D graphics, 3-D animation, and full-motion video—in other words, a graphics card that can take whatever you throw at it. Minimal requirements here dictate a PCI card with a 64-bit graphics accelerator and 2MB of display memory; 3-D games and high-resolution, true-color graphics may call for 4MB. Since software standards are still in flux, ask about the number of available titles or level of 3-D game support if you're eyeing one of the snazzy new 3-D accelerators.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

BY DON LABRIOLA

DirectWave
THUNDER
INTERNET READY
MICRON
MILLENNIA
POWER
RESET
Zenon

the Ocean Floor

I swam to the bottom of the ocean. Very dark down there. The fish were neat but I wouldn't want to eat them.

The Moon

Took a walk on the moon with Dad. Met a guy named Neil. Nice man, but strange clothes.

2183 A.D.

Battled hundreds of invading aliens. I could've saved the planet if Mom didn't stop me for lunch.

THE NEC READY SYSTEM CAN TAKE YOUR FAMILY TO

Want to take your kids to the bottom of the ocean? How about a trip back to the year 1863? Obviously, you're going to need a highly sophisticated mode of transportation. And that's precisely why we've developed the NEC Ready system.

It's more than just an advanced multimedia computer. It's a vehicle for your imagination. We've given it cutting-edge 3-D video technology, an NEC MultiSpin® 8X CD-ROM reader, as well as a 3-D SRS surround sound system. Just one trip and you'll be convinced it's the most realistic multimedia experience ever created.

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Gettysburg

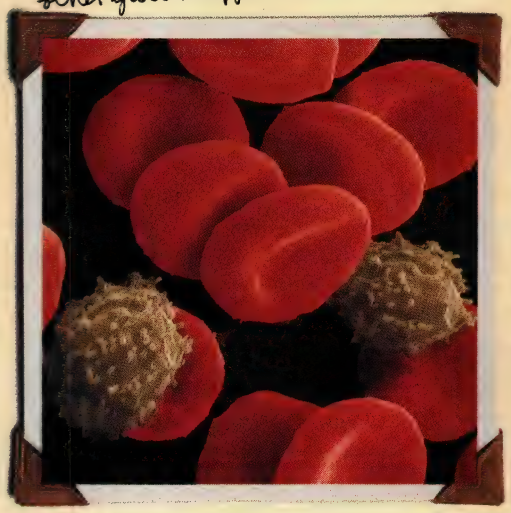
Met the 16th President of the United States. Dad said he was real smart, but he looked kind of silly in that hat.

The Jurassic Period

Walked right up to a giant lizard. Mom said it ate plants and not people. I wasn't so sure.

Inside Me

Followed blood cells through the body. Dad pointed out the heart, brain and other gross stuff.



PLACES A TRAVEL AGENT COULDN'T EVEN DREAM OF.

The NEC Ready system also offers one-button Internet access and an interactive video wizard called "Merlin" that effortlessly guides you through special features. What's more, it has an Intel Pentium® processor ranging from 120 to 200MHz, 32 MB RAM, and a 33.6 Kbps modem, all of which help you reach your destination in a matter of seconds. That way, you'll never have to hear, "Are we there yet, daddy?"

For more information, just call 1-800-NEC-INFO, or visit us on the web at http: //www.nec.com. The NEC Ready system is available at the following locations:

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Coming Attractions

If you think multimedia accelerators and CD recorders are impressive, just wait: The best may be yet to come. Here's a peek at some upcoming technologies that promise to radically alter the way PCs are configured and used.

AGP (Accelerated Graphics Port): AGP is a high-speed graphics pipeline specification developed by Intel that provides a high-bandwidth, low-latency connection to system memory necessary for high-quality 3-D graphics. The specification has been endorsed by Microsoft and nearly all the major graphics card vendors and is expected to begin showing up in Pentium Pro-based systems early next year.

CD-E: The ubiquitous CD format isn't likely to go away anytime soon. The latest innovation is the CD-Erasable recorder, which—unlike today's CD-ROMs—will let you record on the same disc multiple times. The first CD-E recorders are expected by the end of the year, and prices could reach commodity levels as early as next year.

DVD: DVD is a next-generation optical disc format that may replace both CD-ROM and VHS videotape. Using MPEG-2 video compression, it will provide picture quality superior to that of standard NTSC television. A first-generation DVD will hold 4.7GB of data—enough capacity for a full-length motion picture—and double-sided, double-layered versions will store up to 17GB. DVD video players are expected to attain consumer pricing levels sometime next year, with DVD-ROM drives and personal DVD recorders following soon thereafter. All these devices will also be able to play standard CDs.

FireWire: The FireWire specification (also known as IEEE 1394) defines a USB-like external Plug and Play bus designed for high-throughput devices such as digital video cameras. Initially running at 100Mbps, it's touted as a relatively low-cost, scaleable interface that could eventually provide multi-gigabit/sec bandwidth.

MMX: Starting next year, new Intel CPUs—as well as next-generation non-Intel processors such as the Cyrix M2 and AMD K6—will support Intel's multimedia extensions (MMX) to its x86 instruction set. Intel claims that MMX-enabled CPUs will provide up to four times greater performance when executing graphics, video, and audio operations. The technology may even make it possible to perform tasks like video conferencing and MPEG-2 video playback without expansion boards.

USB: The 12Mbps Universal Serial Bus replaces conventional parallel and serial ports—as well as a host of other interfaces—with a single external connector. USB provides a low-cost, LAN-like bus that can connect up to 127 devices and lets you hot-plug peripherals without shutting off power or installing drivers. The first USB-equipped machines are about to ship, and many industry observers expect the standard to become prevalent within the next few years. Several vendors are also rumored to be planning add-on products and motherboard upgrades that will let you adapt existing systems and peripherals to the new standard.

If you'll be using graphics-intensive programs on a 17-inch or larger monitor, consider a graphics card equipped with fast, dual-ported video RAM (VRAM). Cards with dynamic RAM (DRAM) are far more economical and adequate for everyday applications, with the increasingly popular EDO DRAM and WRAM serving slots in between.

Along with smooth visuals, great sound is also part of the multimedia experience. A fair number of PCs still come with low-end, FM-synthesis sound cards, though more realistic-sounding wavetable cards with features like digital reverb, 3-D audio, and digital sampling capabilities are available.

Some vendors are also touting audio alternatives such as sound-enabled motherboards and combination sound and graphics cards. These solutions are fine for less-demanding games and telephony applications, but MIDI musicians and home-recording enthusiasts will want a top-notch, wavetable card.

No matter how good your sound card is, you won't be able to appreciate it if your system is saddled with a pair of cheap speakers. Luckily, vendors are beginning to recognize the value of bundling better-than-door-prize-quality speakers with their multimedia PCs. If your system comes with a pair of underpowered minispeakers, ask about upgrading to a better-quality three-piece system that combines a pair of desktop satellite units with a subwoofer for enhanced bass performance. This may add $100 or more to the price, but if you plan to spend some of your time playing games or listening to audio CDs, it's a good investment.

Finally, since you'll undoubtedly want to go online, any new multimedia PC should include a 28.8Kbps or faster modem with communications software.

How Fast is Fast?

Last year at this time the DX4/100 processor still had some life in it for budget buyers, the 75MHz Pentium was considered entry-level, and the Pentium 133 was as fast as it got. But today, with the P100 or even the P133 as the starting point for most system configurations, there's really no such thing as low CPU speed anymore.

Moreover, today's distributed architectures have offloaded many functions from the CPU to other parts of the

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CD ROM

	WITH SOUND		WITHOUT SOUND	
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system. Adding a graphics accelerator, for instance, can do more to improve display speed than a processor upgrade.

Even when comparing the performance of individual processors, clock rates are often outweighed by architectural issues such as caching mechanisms and instruction-set formats. Intel's Pentium Pro, for instance, is optimized for 32-bit environments like Windows NT but provides a much smaller speed advantage over the Pentium when running Windows 95.

Further muddying the waters are Intel rivals such as Cyrix and AMD, whose Pentium-class CPUs provide different levels of performance at the same clock speed as Intel parts, leading to the adoption of the P-rating scale for judging comparable chips. Another consideration is the scheduled appearance of MMX technology in early 1997, which promises a major speed boost for compatible multimedia applications. (See the sidebars "What's Inside?" and "Coming Attractions.")

Memory is an area where it never pays to skimp. Today's rock-bottom RAM prices and demanding applications have made 16MB mandatory for even entry-level systems. Stepping up to 32MB is a sound investment for serious multitasking of graphical and multimedia programs, but less essential for Windows 95 than it is for Windows NT.

Which flavor of RAM to choose can be a more vexing matter. Over the past year, the standard fast-page mode (FPM) DRAM has been effectively replaced by faster extended-data-out (EDO) DRAM and synchronous DRAM (SDRAM)—an industry-wide change for the better, and one with little or no discernible impact on pricing.

It's also important to outfit a Pentium-class PC with an adequate Level 2 (L2) cache—256K or, if you crave the last iota of performance, 512K of synchronous or pipeline-burst static RAM. The Pentium Pro carries its secondary cache inside the chip.

CyberMax Game Station

Gateway 2000 P5-200

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Expansion Plans

Most PC motherboards nowadays provide two Enhanced IDE connectors that can each handle two EIDE hard drives or ATAPI CD-ROM or tape drives. You'll take a performance hit if you mix a CD-ROM and a hard drive on the same connector, so if you need more than two hard drives and a CD on the same machine, make at least one device a SCSI drive. Unless the motherboard includes an integrated SCSI interface, this will require a SCSI adapter card. For the latter, a PCI bus-mastering board yields the smoothest installation and best multitasking performance.

Any desktop motherboard should incorporate at least one parallel and two serial ports. Make sure that the parallel port conforms to the high-speed EPP (enhanced parallel port) or ECP (extended capabilities port) standards, especially if you'll be connecting it to an external storage device such as a tape or removable-cartridge drive. The serial port should be outfitted with a high-throughput 16550A UART controller to handle 28.8Kbps or faster external modems; internal modems usually have their own UARTs.

The motherboard should have at least two or three free ISA slots to maintain compatibility with the many 16-bit expansion cards still on the market, as well as at least three 32-bit PCI slots to accommodate add-ons such as graphics accelerators and SCSI adapters. Some otherwise robust machines ship with few or no open slots because their motherboards lack integrated I/O or multimedia features, or because poor configuration choices have consumed all the slots of one bus type.

Some PCs with slimline chassis or other stylish, space-saving form factors provide limited expansion options. These systems often try to maximize on space by integrating sound, communications, or graphics capabilities onto the motherboard. But if you ever decide to upgrade any of these func-

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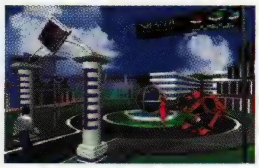

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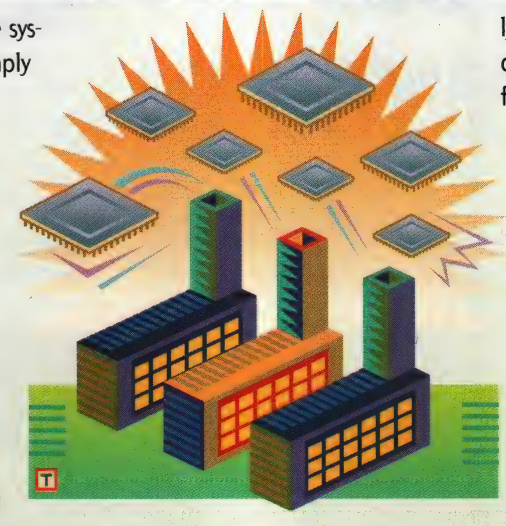
What's Inside?

It used to be easy to gauge system performance by simply comparing CPU speeds. Today, not only do other components such as hard drives, graphics accelerators, and RAM (both the amount and type) play as large a role as a PC's processor, but also new competitors to Intel's chips have made megahertz ratings no longer reliable when it comes to real-world performance.

That's why Intel's leading rivals, Cyrix and AMD, have adopted a new benchmark called the P-rating specification, which indicates how a processor compares to a given Intel Pentium. For instance, Cyrix calls its 133MHz 6x86 CPU the P166+ because it meets or slightly beats the pace of a Pentium 166. Tests of Cyrix-based PCs by *Computer Shopper* and other magazines have substantiated that claim.

The most aggressive (if still relatively puny) challenger to Intel's market share, Cyrix matches the Pentium line chip for chip, including a P200+. As well as supplying a number of system vendors, the company offers 6x86 motherboard upgrades and even its own brand of PCs. IBM Electronics produces the 6x86 and also markets the chip under its own name.



Early in 1997 Cyrix plans to ship a Pentium Pro-class, MMX-compatible successor code-named M2. While Intel customers have no clear Pentium-to-Pentium-Pro upgrade path, Cyrix boasts that the M2 will plug right into 6x86 sockets.

As for AMD, the company is finally shipping its often-delayed, Pentium-class K5 processor, although the fastest version available at press time carried a P100 rating. P150 and perhaps faster versions should appear late this year, and AMD's Pentium Pro competitor—the K6, based on a design from NexGen, the pioneering Pentium cloner that AMD acquired last January—is expected in 1997.

Meanwhile, Intel continues to push the processor envelope. The arrival of the 200MHz Pentium has redefined the P166 and P133 as midrange and entry-level products, respectively, while the aggressively discounted Pentium Pro has no current competition from Cyrix or AMD.

While the MMX version of the Pentium should be January's big news in the consumer market, analysts expect Intel's summer blockbuster to be an MMX-based Pentium Pro spin-off code-named Klamath and equipped with an external rather than the Pro's internal secondary cache for economy's sake.

ILLUSTRATION BY JEAN TUTTLE

tions, the low slot count can prove to be a problem.

Your system should also be equipped with at least one free internal 3.5-inch drive bay, for adding a second hard drive, as well as several vacant external or front-accessible bays for devices such as tape or CD-Recordable (CD-R) drives. If you need a lot of room for expansion, it's worth spending the extra $100 for a full-size tower chassis, which can provide eight or more slots and up to a dozen bays.

Even though choosing a system with Plug and Play capabilities doesn't guarantee hassle-free installation, the technology is definitely worth buying into. Most PCs sold today are equipped with the Plug and Play-compliant BIOS and PCI bus architecture preferred by Windows 95. But the Plug and Play standard is still a work in progress, so make sure your system includes a flash BIOS, which can be upgraded via a software utility without physically swapping ROM chips.

One final factor to consider is your system's software bundle. Some business-oriented machines ship with only a smattering of packages, but many home and home-office desktops come loaded with an array of games and educational titles, as well as productivity applications such as Microsoft Office or Lotus SmartSuite. Make sure that each preinstalled title also provides master or backup disks and, if possible, printed electronic manuals.

And watch out for bundles filled with virtually worthless discontinued titles and demos. Ask for a complete list of bundled software before buying, and remember that a single copy of a multipurpose package like Microsoft Works can be worth more than a dozen remaindered CD-ROMs.

Read the Fine Print

It's easy to become focused on price when making a complex buying decision, but support and service issues can be vital to the total cost of ownership. Be sure to ask about the vendor's return and warranty policies: If you decide to return the machine, will you be expected to pay shipping costs or, far worse, an exorbitant restocking fee? Also check to see if there's a post-delivery grace period in which you can make configuration changes without invoking a surcharge. And always obtain a written copy of your vendor's warranty, return, and exchange policies.

For many users, the most important support issues are same- or next-day onsite service and guaranteed repair times.

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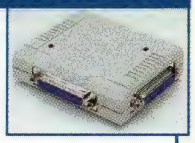

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If your vendor offers these options only with an extended warranty, examine it carefully. Extended contracts can be valuable for machines used in mission-critical applications, but they may wind up costing you more than simply paying for repairs as needed.

Find out which service provider or subcontractor actually fulfills the terms of the contract, and check its track record in your geographical area. Also, try to learn the vendor's criteria for authorizing an onsite service call: It's fair to expect a good-faith effort to fix problems over the phone before a company pays for a house call, but some firms abuse the repairs-at-their-own-discretion angle.

DirectWave Blue Thunder Cx200 MVP ProS

A final, important consideration is the availability of unlimited live telephone support. The best suppliers offer toll-free support lines 24 hours a day and seven days a week, as well as electronic alternatives like e-mail, Web sites, online-service forums, and return-fax services.

Wrap it Up

Buying a PC involves numerous variables, but if you take a methodical approach, you will have no trouble finding the machine of your dreams—and one that won't be obsolete by next Thanksgiving.

Going Direct

Buying computer equipment through the direct channel has many advantages: a wide selection of products; quick turnaround on your order; and prompt, reliable service. Here are a few guidelines to help make mail order work for you.

You're likely to find that a product's price varies from vendor to vendor. To ensure that you get the best deal possible, keep complete records of your vendor contacts and their policies before placing your order.

Buy only from vendors that offer a 30-day, no-questions-asked money-back guarantee. This gives you the option of canceling your order if a preferable product appears or if you change your mind.

When placing your order, don't hang up the phone without verifying the manufacturer, model number, size, component parts, product compatibility, and warranty for the items you want. Get the names of your sales representatives and make them repeat the details back to you—or better yet, request that a written statement (including the terms of delivery and warranty coverage) be faxed to you. Be clear about whether the product is new or refurbished, and if you'll accept a substitute product in case of unavailability or want a refund instead. Products cannot be substituted without your consent. Also, check that the vendor is liable for shipping the product in good condition from door to door.

Verify that the vendor provides tech support for everything you buy—preferably via a toll-free 800 number, BBS, or Web page.

Always use a credit card. No cash, no checks, not even traveler's checks. This offers extra insurance should something go wrong. Most credit-card companies grant 60 days (two pay periods) to file a written claim about a disputed charge. Make sure to include your name, account number, and any supporting documentation. It's also worth noting that many credit cards will provide an extra year of warranty coverage at no additional cost.

The FTC's Mail Order Merchandising Rule specifies that anything you buy via mail order must be shipped to you within 30 days. If an order can not be shipped within that time frame, the seller must notify you by mail in advance and provide a new date, if known. If you do not respond in writing to the delay notice, the seller has the right to assume that you agree to the delay. However, you have the right to cancel your order at any time before it ships—even after consenting to a delay.

On delivery, make sure that system software is preinstalled (with backups on floppies or CD-ROMs) and that all components (particularly CD-ROM drives and sound cards) are preconfigured and working. Don't be shy about taking a peek under the hood—if you ordered a Creative Labs AWE 32 PnP, for instance, that's what you should receive.

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- 15" MAG DX15T .25 Trinitron Monitor
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- 12X EIDE CD-ROM Drive
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- Yamaha M7 Speakers & Subwoofer
- US Robotics 33.6Kbps Fax/Modem/Voice/Full duplex speakerphone
- Microphone
- 104 Key Windows 95 Keyboard
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive • Serial Mouse
- Windows 95

Game Pad Included

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- 16MB EDO RAM
- 2.5GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 15" MAG DX15T .25 Trinitron Monitor
- Matrox Mystique 3D, 2MB SGRAM
- Full Screen MPEG
- 3D Game Bundle

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- Intel 166MHz Pentium Processor
- 32MB EDO RAM
- 3GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 17" MAG DX700T .25 Trinitron Monitor
- Diamond Monster 3D, 4MB EDO DRAM

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home office pro

- Intel 430HX Chipset
- 512K Pipelined Burst Cache
- 32MB EDO RAM
- 3GB EIDE Hard Drive
- 12X EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Creative Labs Soundblaster 32 Wavetable Sound Card
- Yamaha M7 Speakers & Subwoofer
- US Robotics 33.6Kbps Fax/Modem/Voice/Full duplex speakerphone
- Microphone
- 104 Key Windows 95 Keyboard
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive • Serial Mouse
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- Full Screen MPEG

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1st CompuChoice	Family Multimedia	$1,699	Pentium/166	16MB/168MB/256K/512K	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, J, MC	Y/3/LF/Y
1st CompuChoice	Ultimate CAD Machine	$2,069	Pentium/166	32MB/168MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/3/LF/Y
1st CompuChoice	440FX Pro Multimedia	$3,595	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/3/LF/Y
Aberdeen	Power6 166+	$2,245	Cx 6x86/P166+	32MB/768MB/512K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Aberdeen	P5-200SE	$2,295	Pentium/200	16MB/768MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
ABS Computers	Pentium Multimedia	$1,744	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/512K/*	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/LF/Y
Acer America	Aspire Office Solution	$2,598	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT/3DSO	Y/3/3/Y
Acer America	Aspire Office Solution	$2,998	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT/3DSO	Y/3/3/Y
Acer America	Aspire Ultimate Solution	$3,598	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	3.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 10x CD, WT/3DSO, J	Y/3/3/Y
Acma Computers	sPower 100	$1,649	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, TV	Y/3/1/Y
Acma Computers	sPower 166	$2,095	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, TV	Y/3/1/Y
Acma Computers	zPower Pro 200	$2,495	Pentium Pro/200	16MB/256MB/256K/*	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, TV	Y/3/1/Y
ACW	P5-166DF	$1,998	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Aero Computers	P5100/16	$1,199	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.7GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/LF/Y
Aero Computers	P5133	$1,499	Pentium/133	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.7GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/LF/Y
Aero Computers	P5166/32	$1,799	Pentium/166	32MB/512MB/256K/512K	1.7GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/LF/Y
Alaris	Puma	$2,300	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	2GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	N/3/3/Y
Alpha International	Tritonmedia-2	$1,077	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	6x CD, WT	N/2/LF/N
Alpha International	Super Triton Media	$2,060	Pentium/166	32MB/166MB/512K/*	2GB	17 DS, 8x CD, WT	N/2/LF/N
American Micro Solutions	Professional Multimedia	$1,249	Pentium/120	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/1/LF/Y
American Micro Solutions	Professional Plus Multimedia	$1,699	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/1/LF/Y
American Micro Solutions	Ultimate Multimedia	$2,799	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/256K/*	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 10x CD, WT	N/1/LF/Y
American Multisystems	InfoGold P166 Power Machine	$2,395	Pentium/166	16MB/192MB/256K/1MB	1.7GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/1/1/Y
American Multisystems	AMS P166	$2,550	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/N
American Multisystems	InfoGold P6200 Pro	$3,099	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/256MB/512K/1MB	2.5GB	17 DS. 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, TD	Y/1/1/Y
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Area Electronics Systems	586Hx-System	$1,620	Pentium/133	16MB/512MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/1/1/Y
Area Electronics Systems	586Hx-System	$1,825	Pentium/166	16MB/512MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/1/1/Y
Arsys Innotech	MicroQuest Medalist 120	$1,189	Pentium/120	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.3GB	8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Arsys Innotech	MicroQuest Medalist 133	$1,405	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Arsys Innotech	MicroQuest Medalist 166	$1,759	Pentium/166	32MB/512MB/512K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Arsys Innotech	MicroQuest Destiny Pro 200MM	$2,789	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/512MB/NA/NA	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Ashtek	Super Ninja 133	$1,499	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD	N/1/3/N
Ashtek	Super Ninja 166	$1,799	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/*/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD	N/1/3/N
AST Computer	Advantage 9304	$1,699	Pentium/133	24MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/1/1/N
AST Computer	Advantage 9308	$2,199	Pentium/166	24MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD. WT, MC	Y/1/1/N
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CMO	Gold Series P-150	$1,699	Pentium/150	16MB/256MB/256K/256K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/3/3/N
CMO	Gold Series P-166	$1,999	Pentium/166	32MB/256MB/256K/256K	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/3/3/N
Compaq Computer	Presario 8702 Ult. Multimedia	*	Pentium/166	24MB/128MB/512K/*	2.5GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT/3DSO	Y/1/1/*
CompSource	PowerMedia PC	$1,639	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/3/Y
CompSource	PCTV	$2,329	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD,WT, TV	Y/3/3/Y
CompSource	PCTVMM3	$3,229	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	29 DS, 33.6 MO, 10x CD, WT, J	Y/3/3/Y
Compulink Research	Infinity PTS-133	$1,629	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.7GB	8x CD	Y/3/3/Y
Compulink Research	Infinity PTS-166	$1,880	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.7GB	8x CD	Y/3/3/Y
Compulink Research	Infinity PTS-200	$2,256	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	8x CD	Y/3/3/Y
CompuMax International	MaxMultimedia	$1,699	Pentium/166	16MB/168MB/256K/512K	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, J, MC	Y/3/LF/Y
CompuMax International	MaxMedia 440FX Pro	$3,595	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/3/LF/Y

Note: All configurations include a 15-inch monitor (unless a larger size is noted), FM sound card (unless wavetable is noted), Windows 95, and speakers. Contact individual vendors for information on bundled software. "RAM and Cache" indicates standard RAM/maximum RAM/standard cache/maximum cache. "Support" indicates toll-free tech support (yes or no)/parts warranty in years/labor warranty in years/extended warranty available (yes or no). **CD** = CD-ROM drive; **CDCH** = CD-ROM changer; **DS** = display; **GP** = game pad; **J** = joystick; **LF** = lifetime; **MC** = microphone; **MO** = modem; **NA** = not applicable; **SC** = scanner; **TD** = tape drive; **3DSO** = 3-D sound; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT** = wavetable; **Zip** = Iomega Zip drive; ***** = info. not provided

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MULTIMEDIA [PCs]

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Computer Technology Link	CTL P133	$2,829	Pentium/133	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/2/Y
Computer Technology Link	CTL PRO200	$3,789	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/2/Y
CompuWorld	Power Multimedia	$1,247	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.2GB	6x CD, WT	Y/3/6/N
CompuWorld	Super System	$1,455	Pentium/100	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/6/N
CompuWorld	Mega System	$1,999	Pentium/100	64MB/256MB/512K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/3/6/N
Comtrade	Multimedia Dream Machine	$1,875	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
CyberMax Computer	Max A6 PR 133	$1,499	AMD K5/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
CyberMax Computer	Max I3 P166	$1,949	Pentium/166	24MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
CyberMax Computer	The Game Machine	$2,249	Cx 6x86/P166+	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.6GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, J	Y/3/1/Y
CyberMax Computer	ProMax 4	$2,499	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	3GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
CyberMax Computer	Max C6 P200+	$2,599	Cx 6x86/P200+	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	3GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
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Cyrix Systems Direct	Cyrix 6x86-200+	$2,299	Cx 6x86/P200+	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	2.5GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/3/1/N
Data Express System	Compu Pro	$1,399	Pentium/120	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 6x CD	Y/1/1/Y
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Dee One Systems	P5-166 DMS	$1,548	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	N/1/LF/N
Dee One Systems	PP-200 DMS	$2,648	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/768MB/256K/256K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD	N/1/LF/N
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DirectWave	MVP Pro-166	$1,999	Pentium/166	16MB/256MB/512K/512K	1.7GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, J	Y/3/3/Y
DirectWave	MVP Pro-166	$2,249	Pentium/166	16MB/256MB/512K/512K	1.7GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, J	Y/3/3/Y
DMD	Entry Level	$1,395	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/512K/*	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 6x CD, WT, J	Y/2/2/Y
DMD	Mega Power #307	$1,920	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/512K/*	1.6GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, J	Y/2/2/Y
EPS Technologies	Evolution EV-1	$1,545	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.2GB	7x CD, WT	Y/3/1/N
EPS Technologies	Evolution EV-2	$2,520	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/N
EPS Technologies	EPS Evolution EV-4	$2,995	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	3.2GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/N
Gateway 2000	PS-166FPC	$2,449	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/3/Y
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Gateway 2000	PS-200FPC	$2,999	Pentium/200	32MB/64MB/256K/512K	3GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/3/Y
Hertz Computer	P100e	$1,715	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Hertz Computer	P133e	$1,815	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Hertz Computer	P166e	$2,385	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Hewlett-Packard	Pavilion 7280P	$2,848	Pentium/166	16MB/*/256K/*	2.5GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, SC	Y/1/1/Y
Hewlett-Packard	Pavilion 7285	$3,748	Pentium/200	32MB/*/256K/*	3.1GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Hewlett-Packard	Pavilion 7295V	$3,948	Pentium/200	32MB/*/256K/*	3.8GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Hi-Tech USA	PP-200 Multimedia	$1,998	Pentium Pro/200	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	N/1/LF/N
Hi-Tech USA	PP-200 Multimedia	$2,748	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/256MB/256K/256K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD	N/1/LF/N
Hi-Tech USA	DPP-200 Multimedia	$3,598	(2) Pentium Pro/200	32MB/1GB/256K/256K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD	N/1/LF/N
IBM	C65	$3,268	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
IBM	S66	$3,599	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	3.2GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, J	Y/3/1/Y
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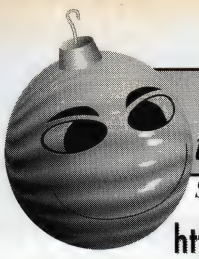
Note: All configurations include a 15-inch monitor (unless a larger size is noted), FM sound card (unless wavetable is noted), Windows 95, and speakers. Contact individual vendors for information on bundled software. "RAM and Cache" indicates standard RAM/maximum RAM/standard cache/maximum cache. "Support" indicates toll-free tech support (yes or no)/parts warranty in years/labor warranty in years/extended warranty available (yes or no). **CD** = CD-ROM drive; **CDCH** = CD-ROM changer; **DS** = display; **GP** = game pad; **J** = joystick; **LF** = lifetime; **MC** = microphone; **MO** = modem; **NA** = not applicable; **SC** = scanner; **TD** = tape drive; **3DSO** = 3-D sound; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT** = wavetable; **Zip** = Iomega Zip drive; ***** = info. not provided



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Micron Electronics	Home MPC P133	$1,999	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 12x CD	Y/3-5/1/Y
Micron Electronics	Home MPC P166	$2,799	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 12x CD, WT	Y/3-5/1/Y
Micron Electronics	Home MPC P200	$3,149	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 12x CD, WT	Y/3-5/1/Y
Micronix USA	Family Media Pro P-100MHx	$1,325	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/1MB	1.3GB	33.6 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/3/LF/Y
Micronix USA	Home Media P-133MHx	$1,625	Pentium/133	32MB/128MB/256K/1MB	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/LF/Y
Micronix USA	Home Office P-166MHx	$1,925	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/1MB	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/LF/Y
Midwest Micro	P5-120 Home PC	$1,575	Pentium/120	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	14.4 MO, 8x CD	Y/3-5/3-5/N
Midwest Micro	P5-166 3D Interactive MPEG	$1,999	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.6GB	8x CD	Y/3-5/3-5/N
Midwest Micro	P5-166 Home 3D PC	$2,199	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	33.6 MO, 12x CD, WT	Y/3-5/3-5/N
Midwest Micro	P5-200 3D Interactive MPEG	$2,499	Pentium/200	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 8x CD, WT	Y/3-5/3-5/N
Midwest Micro	P5-200 Home PC	$3,199	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	3.8GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 12x CD, WT	Y/3-5/3-5/N
Multiwave Tech.	Home Station 3D	$1,645	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/1/LF/Y
Multiwave Tech.	Ultra Power	$2,215	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/1/LF/Y
Multiwave Tech.	ProPower	$2,575	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/512MB/256K/256K	2.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 10x CD, WT, MC	Y/1/LF/Y
National Microcomputers	NMC-CS12-P100	$1,349	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/*	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD	Y/3/3/Y
National Microcomputers	NMC-CS12-P133	$1,495	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD	Y/3/3/Y
National Microcomputers	NMC-CS12-P166+	$1,995	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2GB	28.8 MO, 17 DS, 8x CD, WT, Zip	Y/3/3/Y
National Microcomputers	NMC-CS12-PP200	$2,145	Pentium Pro/200	64MB/1GB/256K/512K	2GB	28.8 MO, 17 DS, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/3/Y
NEC	Ready 9624	$2,348	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, Zip	Y/1/1/Y
NEC	Ready 9628	$3,048	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	3.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, Zip	Y/1/1/Y
NEC	Power Player 2020	$3,898	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	3.2GB	17 DS, 6x CDCH, WT, J, GP	Y/1/1/Y
Netis Technology	N5133C Media	$1,688	Cx 6x86/P133+	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/1/3/Y
NetTV	World Vision 2900	$3,500	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	29 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, GP	Y/1/1/Y
NetTV	World Vision 2400	$4,500	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	29 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, GP	N/1/1/Y
NetTV	World Vision 3700	$6,000	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	37 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, GP	Y/1/1/Y
New Age Micro	Pro Series 5	$1,395	Pentium/166	32MB/124MB/256K/*	1.7GB	33.6 MO, 7x CD, WT, J	Y/3/LF/N
Nexar Technologies	Nexar 4051	$1,899	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
Nexar Technologies	Nexar 9045	$2,699	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 12x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
Next Century Technology	Centura 16M Plus	$1,865	Pentium/120	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD, WT	N/3/3/N
Next Century Technology	Centura 16MP-3 Plus	$2,565	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/3/3/N
Next Century Technology	Protura 32MPlus	$2,999	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/1MB	2.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/3/3/N
Next Intl.	Best Buy Multimedia Home	$1,295	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD	N/1/LF/Y
Next Intl.	686 Performance Station	$1,545	Cx 6x86/P166+	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/1/LF/Y
Next Intl.	SOHO	$1,795	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	N/1/LF/Y
Packard Bell	Platinum 60	$2,398	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, TV	Y/1/1/Y
Packard Bell	Platinum Pro 750	*	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	3.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, TV	Y/1/1/Y
Packard Bell	Platinum 55	*	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, Zip	Y/1/1/Y
Pactron Integration	DaytonWin-Nx	$1,460	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/2/2/Y
Pactron Integration	Dayton WinPro-NX	$1,657	Pentium/150	16MB/768MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/2/2/Y
Pactron Integration	PhantomNet-P6S	$2,164	Pentium Pro/200	16MB/768MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/2/2/Y
Pactron Integration	Dayton WinPro-DTX	$2,168	(2) Pentium/150	16MB/512MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/2/2/Y

Note: All configurations include a 15-inch monitor (unless a larger size is noted), FM sound card (unless wavetable is noted), Windows 95, and speakers. Contact individual vendors for information on bundled software. "RAM and Cache" indicates standard RAM/maximum RAM/standard cache/maximum cache. "Support" indicates toll-free tech support (yes or no)/parts warranty in years/labor warranty in years/extended warranty available (yes or no). **CD** = CD-ROM drive; **CDCH** = CD-ROM changer; **DS** = display; **GP** = game pad; **J** = joystick; **LF** = lifetime; **MC** = microphone; **MO** = modem; **NA** = not applicable; **SC** = scanner; **TD** = tape drive; **3DSO** = 3-D sound; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT** = wavetable; **Zip** = Iomega Zip drive; ***** = info. not provided

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PC9020	P120	12.1 DS	1.1GB	16 EDO	6x CD	zvport/12 256	$2799.00	Call
PC9030	P120	11.3 TFT	1.1GB	8	6x CD	up to 64 meg	$2849.00 even less	$2399
PC9050	P133	11.3 TFT	1.1GB	16 EDO	6x CD	zvport/12 256	Call	N/A
PC9080	P133	12.1 TFT	1.3GB	16 EDO	6x CD	28.8 fax/12 256	Call	N/A
PC9070	P133	12.1 Active	16GB	16MB	4x CD		$3950.00	

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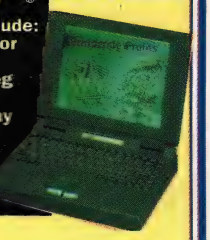

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T110CT	P100	11.3 TFT	810	8		$2450.00 less
Tecra 700CS P120 11.3 DS SVGA, Lithium, 8MB						$3950.00

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P100	10.4 TFT	772	8	N/A	28.8Fax/Lan	LOW PRICE

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560CDT	P75	10.4TFT	1.2G	8	4X CD	$2279.00 less	$1899.00 less
570CD	P100	11.3DS	810	8	6X CD	$2279.00 less	$1899.00 less
570CDT	P100	11.3TFT	1.2G	8	6X CD	$2899.00 less	Call

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355	586/100	10.4"	540	8	N/A	$1399.00 less	$1199.00 less
361	P120	10.4DS	810	16	N/A	$1999.00 less	Call
957	P75	10.4"AM	810	8	N/A		$1499.00

Canon

Call for 480CDS, 480CDT & others.

Model	Proc.	Display	HD	RAM	CD-ROM	Price	Refurbished
480CDS	P100	11.3DS	1.2	8	6X CD	$2179.00 less	$1899.00 less
480CDT	P100	11.3TFT	810	8	4X CD	$2449.00 less	$1999.00 less
490CDT	P133	Act Clr	1.08	16	6X CD	$2899.00	

SAMSUNG

Model	Proc.	RAM	HD	Display	CD-ROM	Price
Sens800	P120	8MB	1.3GB	10.4" Active Maxrix Color		$2099.00
Sens810	P100	8MB	810MB	11.3" DS Color	4x CD-ROM	$2299.00
Sens810	P100	8MB	810MB	12.1" Active	6x CD-ROM	$2999.00
Sens810	P133	16MB	1.3GB	12.1" Active	6x CD-ROM	$3599.00

CLOSEOUT SPECIALS

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954 P75, 8MB, 810MB, 10.4" DS Color ..... $1350.00 Less
958 P120, 16MB, 1GB, 10.4" DS Color ..... $1599.00 Less
959 P120, 16MB, 1GB, 10.4" Active Color ..... $1799.00 Less

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ASCENTIA 950 P90, 8MB, 800MB, 10.4" DS Color, Sound $1299.00 Less
ASCENTIA 950 P90, 8MB, 1.2GB, 10.4" DS Color, Sound .$1399.00 Less
ASCENTIA J10 P75, 8MB, 500MB, 10.4" DS Color, 14.4 F/M ..$1250.00 Less
ASCENTIA J10 P75, 8MB, 800MB, 10.4" DS Color, 14.4 F/M ..$1299.00 Less
AUSTIN P90 8/540 Sound 10.4 DS Color ..... $1499.00 Less
CANON P75 8/540 Sound Card DS Color, Factory Serv. .$1250.00 Less
CANON 1100 P90 8/810 Sound 11.3 DS Color ..... $1700.00 Less
CTX DX4/75 8/420 Sound Active Color, Fact. Serv. ..... $989.00 Less
*EPSON 880C, DX2/80 8/340 Fax/Modem, Sound DS Color $1079.00 Less
*EPSON 880CX DX 2/80 8MB, 700MB, AM Color, Sound, 14.4 F/M ..$1399.00 Less

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Pantheus Computer System	3D WinX	$1,920	Pentium/133	16MB/256MB/256K/512K	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, J, TV	Y/1/LF/Y
Pantheus Computer System	SOHO	$2,450	Pentium/200	32MB/256MB/256K/512K	2.5GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, J	Y/1/LF/Y
Pantheus Computer System	3D Razor	$2,560	Pentium/166	32MB/256MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, J, TV	Y/1/LF/Y
PC Importers	Professional Polar P-133	$1,599	Pentium/133	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/LF/N
PC Importers	Executive Wolf P150	$1,699	Pentium/150	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/LF/N
PC Importers	PCI Home MPC	$1,799	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/LF/N
PC Importers	Grizzly-95 P-200 Station	$2,749	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/LF/N
Polywell Computers	Poly 5133P	$1,550	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	6x CD	Y/3/5/Y
Polywell Computers	Poly 686-166P	$2,250	Cx 6x86/P166+	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/5/Y
Polywell Computers	Poly 5200P8	$2,650	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/3/5/Y
ProGen Systems	Discover MPEG II P120	$1,399	Pentium/120	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
ProGen Systems	Discover MPEG II P200	$1,849	Pentium/200	16MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
ProGen Systems	Atlas P166	$2,119	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	2.1GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT, MC	Y/3/1/Y
Quantex Microsystems	QP5/166 M-4	$2,499	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	3.2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
Quantex Microsystems	QP5/200 SM-3	$2,799	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	3.2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
Quantex Microsystems	QP6/200 Pro-4	$3,699	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	4GB	17 DS, PD/CD	Y/3/1/Y
Quark Technology	QT Media P5	$1,259	Cx 6x86/P150+	16MB/512MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	8x CD	Y/3/LF/N
Renegade Systems	Power Graphics Pro	$1,499	Cx 6x86/P150+	16MB/512MB/256K/512K	1.3GB	33.6 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Renegade Systems	Power Gamer 3D Plus	$2,039	Cx 6x86/P166+	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 10x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Renegade Systems	Dream Station I	$2,899	Cx 6x86/200+	32MB/256MB/256K/512K	2.5GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Robotech	Cobra PCW-P166	$1,799	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 6x CD	Y/3/1/Y
Robotech	Cobra XLT-P200	$3,095	Pentium/200	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/1/Y
Robotech	Cobra XLP/P200	$3,799	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/*/256K/512K	2.1GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD	Y/3/1/Y
Royal Computer	Internet Starter System	$1,195	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	14.4 MO, 6x CD	Y/1/LF/Y
Royal Computer	Rage Media	$2,145	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/LF/Y
Royal Computer	Rage Media Pro	$2,395	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/LF/Y
Royal Computer	Power Graphic 128	$2,795	Pentium/166	64MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/LF/Y
Royal Computer	Omega 128	$4,495	Pentium/166	64MB/128MB/512K/512K	4GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 8x CDCH, WT	Y/1/LF/Y
Smart Machine	Hurricane	$1,499	Cx 6x86/P166+	16MB/256MB/256K/512K	2.1GB	8x CD, WT	N/2/2/Y
Sony	PCV-70	*	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	2.1GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Sony	PCV-90	*	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/256K	2.5GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Sys Technology	Sys Performance C166T2	$2,469	Cx 6x86/P166+	16MB/512MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1-3/1/Y
Sys Technology	Sys Performance P166T2	$2,629	Pentium/166	16MB/512MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1-3/1/Y
Sys Technology	Sys Performance C200+	$2,819	Cx 6x86/P200+	16MB/256MB/256K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1-3/1/Y
Tagram System	Thunderbolt Office Station	$1,330	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/*	1.7GB	6x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Tagram System	Thunderbolt Family Best Buy	$1,510	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.7GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Tagram System	Thunderbolt Virtual Studio	$4,365	Pentium/166	64MB/128MB/512K/*	4.3GB	21 DS, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Tangent Computer	TC5100 MediaGem	$1,750	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/3/Y
Tangent Computer	TC5133 MediaGem	$1,895	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/3/Y
Tangent Computer	TC5200 MediaGem	$3,095	Pentium/200	32MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/3/3/Y
Tatung	TCS-5100	$2,489	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/256K	1.2GB	6x CD, 28.8 MO	Y/2/1/Y
TDN	TDN Pentium/120	$1,399	Pentium/120	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/3/Y
TDN	TDN Pentium/166	$1,999	Pentium/166	32MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.1GB	33.6 MO, 10x CD, WT	Y/1/3/Y
TDN	TDN Pentium/200	$2,999	Pentium/200	64MB/128MB/512K/512K	2.5GB	17 DS, 10x CD, 33.6 MO, WT	Y/1/3/Y
Tempest Micro	586 GigaMedia 150	$1,438	Pentium/150	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/LF/Y
Tempest Micro	686 GigaMedia	$1,448	Cx 6x86/P166+	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/LF/Y
Tempest Micro	586 SuperMedia 166	$1,908	Pentium/166	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	2GB	17 DS, 33.6 MO, 10x CD, WT	Y/1/LF/Y
Tri-Star Computer	Tri-CAD Multimedia	$1,755	Pentium/133	16MB/256MB/256K/256K	1.6GB	6x CD	Y/3/LF/N
Tri-Star Computer	Tri-CAD MM Plus	$2,795	Pentium/166	32MB/256MB/256K/256K	2.1GB	8x CD, 17 DS, WT	Y/3/LF/N
Unitek Tech.	P5-100 Phantom	$1,429	Pentium/100	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Unitek Tech.	P5-133 Thunderstreak	$1,559	Pentium/133	16MB/128MB/256K/512K	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 6x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
Unitek Tech.	P6-200 Commando	$2,999	Pentium Pro/200	32MB/128MB/256K/*	2.1GB	17 DS, 28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT	Y/1/1/Y
USA Flex	Family Classic	$1,895	Pentium/133	16MB/*/256K/*	1.2GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, WT, J	N/3/*/*
USA Flex	440 Pro Multimedia	$2,495	Pentium Pro/180	16MB/128MB/256K/NA	1.6GB	28.8 MO, 8x CD, J	N/3/*/*
Vektron International	Multimedia P120	$1,595	Pentium/120	8MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y
Vektron International	Multimedia P133	$1,645	Pentium/133	8MB/128MB/512K/512K	1.6GB	33.6 MO, 8x CD	Y/1/1/Y

Note: All configurations include a 15-inch monitor (unless a larger size is noted), FM sound card (unless wavetable is noted), Windows 95, and speakers. Contact individual vendors for information on bundled software. "RAM and Cache" indicates standard RAM/maximum RAM/standard cache/maximum cache. "Support" indicates toll-free tech support (yes or no)/parts warranty in years/labor warranty in years/extended warranty available (yes or no). **CD** = CD-ROM drive; **CDCH** = CD-ROM changer; **DS** = display; **GP** = game pad; **J** = joystick; **LF** = lifetime; **MC** = microphone; **MO** = modem; **NA** = not applicable; **SC** = scanner; **TD** = tape drive; **3DSO** = 3-D sound; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT** = wavetable; **Zip** = Iomega Zip drive; * = info. not provided

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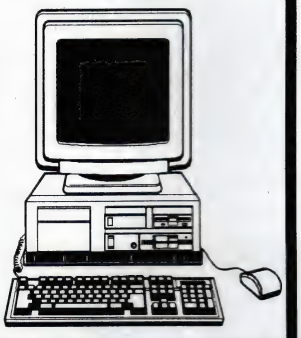

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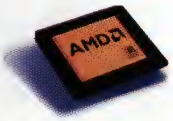

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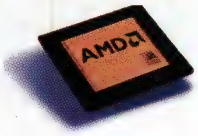

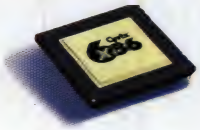

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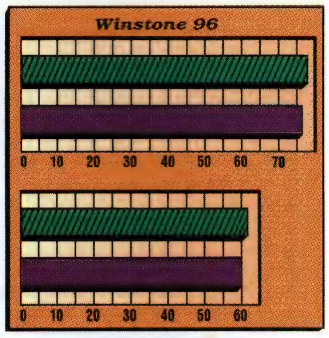

The results are in! The AMD-K5 CPU series outperformed its 586 processor opponents in recent Winstone 96 testing.

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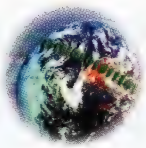

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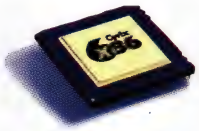

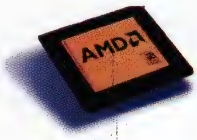

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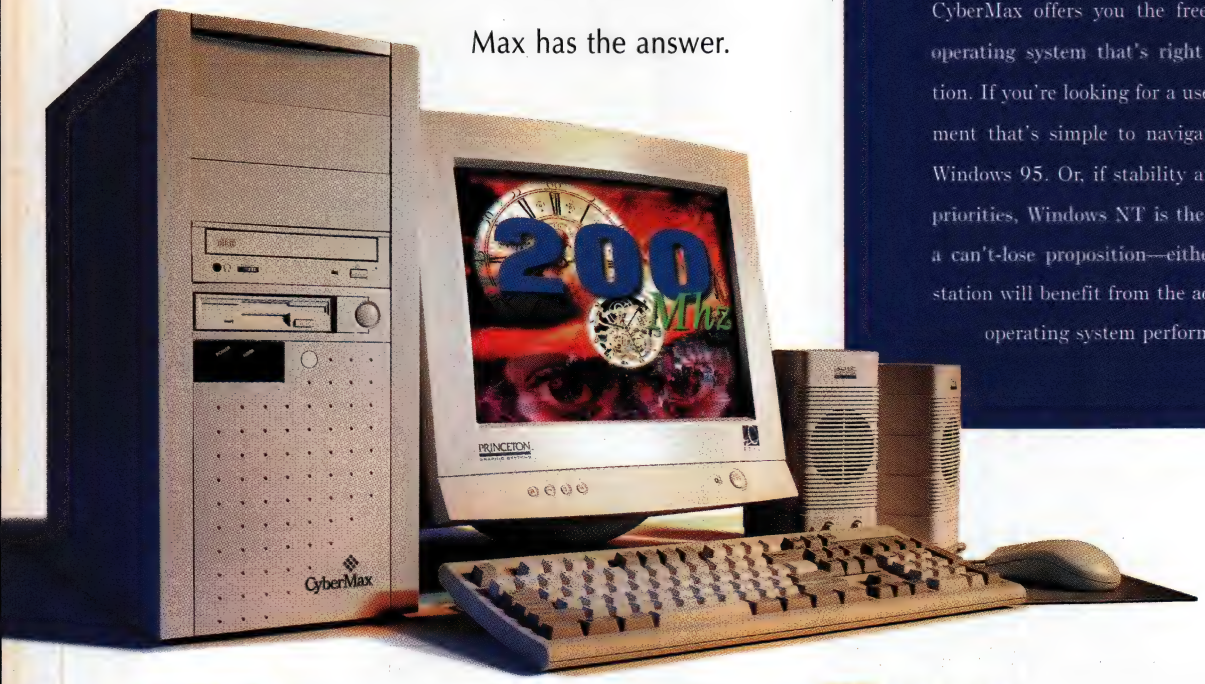

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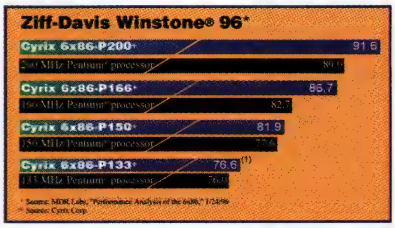

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No-Nonsense Notebooks

the portable PC comes home to roost

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

BY M. DAVID STONE

IT wasn't so long ago that portable computers were largely regarded as traveling office companions—good for on-the-road word processing and number crunching but not much else. Limited by a small, dim screen, skimpy hard drive, cramped keyboard, and other ergonomic and electronic ills, the notebook PC seemed destined to be permanently relegated to the role of the desktop's little sibling.

But times have changed. Today's road warriors can find all the desktop amenities in a package weighing as little as 5 pounds (perhaps a bit more, if you include an AC adapter, external floppy or CD-ROM drive, and a spare battery pack). Meanwhile, even entry-level models offer color displays, 810MB or larger hard drives, and built-in sound, with options for 4x or 6x CD-ROM drives easy to come by. Bottom line: The mobile office is coming home.

In fact, about the only caveat that comes with buying a notebook PC these days is that it may cost more than a similarly outfitted desktop system. Toshiba's Tecra 500CS, for example, boasts a 120MHz Pentium processor, 1.26GB hard drive, 16MB of RAM, 16-bit sound, and a 6x CD-ROM drive at an average direct price of $3,839—at press time, approximately $1,800 more than you'd pay for a comparable desktop. But if you keep tabs on your checkbook, you can hit the road in style.

Samsung Sens-810 and Toshiba Tecra 720CDS

Changing Views

The most notable advance in notebook design of late is the move toward larger and better LCD screens. At this time last year, 11.3-inch screens (measured diagonally) were rare and 12.1-inch screens didn't exist. Today, both sizes are common. Although 10.4-inch displays are still popular, 11.3-inch units are coming on strong in the value-driven $2,000 to $3,500 price range, and high-end notebooks are rapidly graduating to 12.1-inch screens.

Large screens are even showing up on some ultra-lightweight notebooks. Compaq's Armada 4100, for example, packs an 11.8-inch screen into a 4.9-pound package; and IBM's skinny, 4.1-pound ThinkPad 560 offers a 12.1-inch display and P120 or P133 processor.

Accompanying the move to larger screens are higher resolutions. For years, notebook users had to settle for 640x480 VGA resolution, which put a distinct damper on multimedia applications. That changed last year when 800x600 Super VGA screens became widely available, and this year several vendors offer 1,024x768 resolution on 12.1-inch screens.

Another important development has been the narrowing gap between dual-scan passive-matrix and thin-film-transistor (TFT) active-matrix color LCDs. Although TFT screens retain the upper hand in overall brightness and wide viewing angles for presentations, the latest dual-scan LCDs come awfully close, with acceptable color and fairly good motion-video performance.

At the same time, the price difference between the two screen types continues to shrink. Many vendors currently offer 11.3-inch dual-scan notebooks for about the same price as comparable units with 10.4-inch active-matrix screens. In addition, you can expect to pay between $330 and $600 to upgrade a particular screen from dual-scan to active-matrix—considerably less than the $1,000 difference of a year ago.

If you're watching your budget, a dual-scan LCD will probably suffice for most applications. A more important consideration is to select a model with Super VGA resolution, a 64- or 128-bit graphics controller, and at least 1MB of display memory for at least 16-bit color (65,536 colors) support. Many notebooks still offer 16- or 24-bit color only when plugged into an external monitor, and limit their LCDs to 256 colors.

Getting Up to Speed

Power users should note that portables still lag slightly behind desktops in processing power and hard-drive size—although the arrival of P133 and P150 systems equipped with 2GB hard drives is narrowing that gap. Hard drive capacity is booming; at the beginning of this year, 540MB drives were impressive, and today 810MB and 1.2GB drives are dominant.

As for CPU horsepower, a 100MHz or faster Pentium is currently the way to travel in computing comfort, with little real-world reason to choose the mobile P150 rather than the P133. Still, budget-conscious notebook users can find some great under-$2,000 buys on P75 models. Even

better deals are available on discontinued laptops using DX4/100 processors or economy models employing 486-compatible 5x86 processors from AMD and Cyrix, but such notebooks may be better suited for undemanding business applications and e-mail than state-of-the-art multimedia software.

Don't get too caught up on clock speeds, however; system memory is important. Any notebook running Windows 95 should have at least 8MB and preferably 16MB of RAM, with faster EDO DRAM increasingly replacing conventional DRAM as standard. For the best performance, despite a slight trade-off in battery life, another desktop feature formerly rare on notebooks—256K of pipelined-burst secondary or Level 2 cache—is becoming increasingly common.

Notebook batteries are also changing for the better. Although some systems, such as Compaq's LTE 5300, claim up to five hours' computing from a nickel-metal hydride (NiMH) battery, most new notebooks feature longer-lived lithium-ion batteries. Lithium-ion batteries pack more energy per ounce than NiMH cells, though they cost more.

More and more notebooks give you the option of doubling your unplugged time by plugging in a second battery, often into a modular bay that can accommodate either the battery, the unit's floppy drive, or a CD-ROM drive. Others exploit a modular design to hold two hard drives, while still others' floppy drives work either internally or externally—in the latter case, attached via cable so that you can use it and the CD-ROM simultaneously.

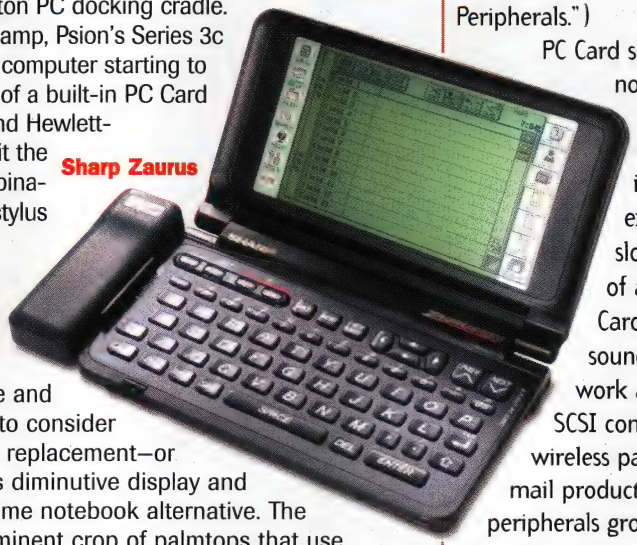
Pocket Power: PDAs

Bill Gates gives speeches about "wallet PCs" and pundits joke about Dick Tracy-type wrist PCs. Neither exists yet, although you can download phone numbers and appointments from your monitor to Timex's Data Link watch. But personal digital assistants (PDAs) have outgrown their early foibles to become power tools for busy businesspeople.

The simplest PDAs are replacements for paper organizers, adding quick searches, alarms, and easy entry of recurring appointments to the functions of a Filofax or Day-Timer. More upscale models offer cable kits that let you exchange data with PCs. The most potent PDAs offer PC links as well as fax and e-mail communications.

The great debate in PDA design is over keyboard versus pen input. In the latter group, Apple's Newton MessagePad is no longer a first-draft fizzle—its handwriting recognition is improved, its screen is backlit, and it even offers a Web browser. U.S. Robotics' 6-ounce Pilot is a nifty, thrifty pocket organizer with a clever, one-button PC docking cradle.

In the keyboard camp, Psion's Series 3c is a powerful palmtop computer starting to look dated for its lack of a built-in PC Card slot. Sharp's Zaurus and Hewlett-Packard's OmniGo split the difference with a combination of keyboard and stylus operation.


Sharp Zaurus

Indeed, one look at the Zaurus' backlit screen and built-in spreadsheet and CompuServe software and you may be tempted to consider a PDA as a notebook replacement—or rather, considering its diminutive display and keyboard, as a part-time notebook alternative. The same goes for an imminent crop of palmtops that use Microsoft's Windows CE operating system, a Windows 95 subset complete with "lite" versions of Word, Excel, and Internet Explorer.

Also in the PDA pipeline, via vendors like Nokia, are a series of smart phones-cellular phones beefed up with e-mail, pager, and PIM functionality. This holiday season's hottest PCs may turn out to be stocking stuffers. ***—Eric Grevstad***

Multimedia On the Move

Indeed, though multimedia features are not as ubiquitous on notebooks as they are on desktop systems, a CD-ROM drive is rapidly becoming a necessity, if only to install software that comes on CD-ROM rather than floppy disks. Notebooks without internal or modular CD-ROM drives can still join the multimedia generation via external drives that plug into parallel ports or PC Card slots. (See the sidebar "Portable Peripherals.")

PC Card slots are notebooks' answer to desktops' internal expansion slots; the list of available PC Card modems, sound cards, network adapters, SCSI controllers, wireless paging and e-mail products, and other peripherals grows longer every day.

Two Type II slots, stacked to accommodate a single, thicker Type III card, are common; 1997 will see a flood of high-end notebooks offering the backward-compatible 32-bit CardBus successor to today's 16-bit PC Card architecture. Some notebooks boast built-in 28.8Kbps modems so that you don't have to set aside a slot for a PC Card modem.

Other essentials for true multimedia performance include Sound Blaster-compatible 16-bit sound—though wavetable-quality sound and decent internal speakers are scarce—and speedy PCI bus architecture. A fully loaded multimedia notebook can cost anywhere from $3,000 to $6,000 or more.

If you seek a portable for use with both a home-base desktop replacement and a mobile office, you can get the

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PC WORLD BEST BUY — April 1996 WinBook XP5 P120 16/1.3GB Active Matrix

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most from a sometimes sizable initial investment by opting for a system with an optional docking station. These products fall into two classes—inexpensive port replicators, which give you a single quick-connect way to attach and detach a full set of desktop peripherals such as a keyboard, monitor, and printer; and full-fledged docking stations, which offer PCI or ISA expansion slots and desktop-style drive bays for storage or backup devices.

By the same token, if you prefer a lightweight portable that's more workhorse than showstopper, you'll be glad to know that subnotebook PCs—formerly panned for squinty screens and cramped keyboards—are back with a vengeance in the guise of so-called slim notebooks. Pentium-powered, active-matrix lightweights such as IBM's ThinkPad 560 and Toshiba's Portégé 650CT rely on external floppy and CD-ROM drives, but make few other compromises.

Portable Peripherals

When gearing up for mobile computing, it's best to travel light. However, there are some laptop add-ons that you just plain need. One or two extras can increase the pleasure of on-the-road computing without breaking your back or your budget.

Although many new notebooks come equipped with CD-ROM drives, older portables and new slimlines lack them. Panasonic's KXL-D740 quad-speed CD-ROM drive plugs into a PC Card slot and doubles as a portable audio CD player when you just want to listen to your favorite tunes while leaving the notebook at home.

To give your mobile presentations an extra kick, Altec Lansing's ACS20 speakers offer quality amplified sound for better bass and sharper treble. The ACS20 system weighs in at under 2 pounds, including power adapter and cables, and is designed to attach to the back of your notebook's screen.

Canon's BJC-70 is a great printer for mobile users who need color output on the road. Weighing just 3 pounds, it delivers output that rivals the quality of many desktop inkjet printers. Citizen's PN60i, meanwhile, excels at black-and-white output (although it also provides decent color), and weighs a mere 1.5 pounds with battery. It also offers an infrared port so that you can use it with infrared-equipped notebooks without carrying a printer cable.

Panasonic KXL-D740

It's easy to be tempted into carrying a whole deck of PC Cards. Aside from Apple's PowerBooks, for instance, finding a notebook with onboard SCSI is virtually impossible. But Adaptec's SlimSCSI card lets you connect SCSI devices through a Type II PC Card. For a bit of fun, New Media's Gamejammer provides MIDI in/out and joystick ports in addition to 8-bit, Sound Blaster-compatible audio.

For the ultimate in communications, many combo cards, such as Xircom's CreditCard Ethernet+Modem 28.8, deliver both 10BaseT and 10Base2 Ethernet connections plus a fax modem with digital phone-line protection and optional cellular-phone support. ***—John Marrin***

Making Tracks

Selecting a notebook also involves a fair degree of attention to ergonomic considerations. For one thing, how much over-the-shoulder weight are you willing to tote around? Portable PCs encompass a wide range in heft; subnotebooks weigh less than 5 pounds, while a top-of-the-line multimedia system can weigh 8 or 9 pounds.

Actual travel weight—stuffing your briefcase with modular or plug-in drives, spare batteries, and the computer's AC adapter (which may be built-in, pocket-sized, or brick-sized)—is more important than the often stripped-down weights quoted in notebook ads.

You'll also want to give some thought as to whether you require a built-in modem, telephony capabilities, or a wireless infrared port to print or exchange data without cables—assuming, that is, that your printer or another PC is also outfitted with an infrared port.

Keyboard size, spacing, and the placement of cursor-control and function keys are critical matters of personal preference, as is the presence of a palm or wrist rest. And perhaps the most hotly debated ergonomic issue among notebook users involves pointing devices or mouse substitutes. Market-wise, the old-fashioned trackball is yielding to the touch pad, which lets you move the cursor by moving your finger. But vendors such as IBM and Toshiba remain loyal to the pointing stick, a miniature joystick embedded in the keyboard.

To ease the dilemma, some manufacturers offer a choice of pointing devices. Micron's Millennia TransPort, for example, provides both a touch pad and pointing stick. Our suggestion: While the direct channel is the place to find bargains, you might want to visit a retailer and get some hands-on experience with pointing devices before heading back to the phone to buy.

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- June 1996, WinBook XP5 P120 16/1.3GB Active Matrix
- October 1996 Windows Recommended WinBook XP5/P120
- January 1996 PC Laptop Editor's Choice — WinBook XP, XP5
- Laptop Buyer's Guide May 1996, WinBook XP5 P120 16/1.3GB TFT
- April 1996 WinBook XP5 P120 16/1.3GB Active Matrix
- October 1996 BYTE Best Value Notebook WinBook FX
- NSTL PC Digest 4-Star Rating — August 1996 WinBook FX P133
- August 1996 PC Magazine Editors' Choice WinBook XP5 P100

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5D Technology	5D-4100P	$2,300	P133	8MB/32MB	810MB	10.4 AM	7.7	FCD, MFD
5D Technology	5D-OHP Series	$2,900	P100	8MB/72MB	810MB	10.4 AM	8	MCD, MFD
5D Technology	5D-6800	$3,100	P150	16MB/72MB	1GB	12.1 AM	7.5	FCD, MFD
5D Technology	5D-9750	$3,700	P166	16MB/80MB	2.1GB	13.3 AM	6.3	FCD, MFD, WT
Acer America Corp.	AcerNote Light 356	$1,799	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 DS	5.8	FFD
Acer America Corp.	AcerNote Light 361	$2,199	P120	16MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 DS	5.8	FFD
Acer America Corp.	AcerNote Light 363	$2,499	P120	16MB/40MB	1GB	10.4 AM	5.8	FFD
Acer America Corp.	AcerNote Nuovo 972	$3,149	P133	16MB/64MB	1.3GB	11.8 DS	7.5	28.8 MO, FFD
Acer America Corp.	AcerNote Nuovo 971	$3,599	P133	16MB/64MB	1.3GB	11.8 AM	7.5	28.8 MO, FFD
Acma Computers	D7200	$2,542	P100	8MB/64MB	810MB	10.4 DS	6.8	MCD (6x), MFD
Acma Computers	AT7200	$2,902	P120	8MB/64MB	810MB	10.4 AM	7.3	MCD (6x), MFD
Acma Computers	T210	$3,492	P133	16MB/64MB	1.3GB	11.3 AM	7.3	MCD (6x), MFD
ACOM	Patriot 8000i	$2,449	P100	8MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 DS	6.4	28.8 PC, MCD (6x)
ACOM	Patriot 8000i	$3,199	P133	24MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 AM	6.4	28.8 PC, MCD (6x), FFD
All Computer Warehouse	ND5126TS	$3,998	P166	16MB/32MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	8.7	33.6 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
Advanced Digital Systems	P100	$2,900	P100	8MB/64MB	810MB	11.3 AM	7	MCD, MFD
Advanced Digital Systems	P120	$2,990	P120	8MB/64MB	810MB	11.3 AM	7	MCD, MFD
Advanced Digital Systems	P133	$3,105	P133	8MB/64MB	810MB	11.3 AM	7	MCD, MFD
Altura Computer Systems	Bolt2-120	$2,295	P100	16MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	7.5	FCD, MFD
AMREL Technology	Maverick	$2,395	P100	8MB/32MB	810MB	10.4 AM	5.7	FFD, CB
AMREL Technology	Symphony	$2,680	P100	8MB/32MB	810MB	10.4 AM	7.2	FCD, MFD, CB
AMREL Technology	Rocky Ruggedized	$4,995	P100	8MB/32MB	810MB	10.4 AM	6.3	EFD, CB
AMS	TravelPro 180CS	$1,995	P100	8MB/40MB	510MB	11.3 DS	6.1	28.8 IM, MFD, CB
AMS	TravelPro 1900	$3,895	P133	16MB/64MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	6.1	28.8 IM, FCD (6x), MFD, CB
AMS	TravelPro 2000	$4,295	P150	16MB/80MB	2.1GB	13.3 AM	6.3	28.8 IM, FCD (8x), MFD, CB
Apple Computer Corp.	PowerBook 1400	$2,799	P117	16MB/64MB	1GB	11.3 DS	6.9	MCD, FCD
ARM Computer	TS753CD-D1	$1,899	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	7	FCD (6x), FFD
ARM Computer	TS753CD-T2	$2,599	P100	24MB/40MB	1.35GB	11.3 AM	7	FCD (6x), FFD
ARM Computer	TS753CD-T5	$2,999	P133	24MB/40MB	1.35GB	12.1 AM	7	FCD (6x), FFD
ARM Computer	TS753CD-T4	$3,299	P120	24MB/40MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	7	28.8 PC, FCD (6x), FFD
ARM Computer	TS96CD-T4	$3,749	P133	40MB/72MB	1.35GB	12.1 AM	6.3	28.8 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
AST Research	Ascentia P50	*	P133	24MB/40MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	7	28.8 IM, MCD, MFD
Austin Direct	Edge Duet	$4,299	P133	16MB/48MB	1.3GB	11.3 AM	6.7	28.8 IM, FCD, MFD
Broadax Systems	NP8623A	$3,160	P133	16MB/40MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	7.9	FCD, FFD
Broadax Systems	NP5265A	$3,185	P150	16MB/32MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	7.7	FCD, FFD
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Canon Computer Systems	Innova Book 490 CDT	$2,999	P133	16MB/32MB	1GB	11.3 AM	6.9	MCD, MFD
Canon Computer Systems	Innova Book 475 CDT	$3,199	P100	8MB/32MB	810MB	11.3 AM	6.6	MCD, MFD
Canon Computer Systems	NoteJet IIIcx	$5,799	P120	8MB/40MB	1.2GB	11.8 AM	9.4	FFD
Chaplet Systems USA	iLuFA 860	$2,995	P120	16MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 AM	6.4	28.8 PC, MCD, MFD
Commax Technologies	SmartBook V-star	$2,880	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	6.9	28.8 PC, MCD (6x)
Commax Technologies	SmartBook V-star	$3,475	P133	8MB/40MB	2.1GB	11.3 DS	6.9	28.8 PC, MCD (6x)
Compaq Computer Corp.	Armada 1120T	$2,299	P100	8MB/24MB	810MB	10.4 AM	6.1	FFD
Compaq Computer Corp.	Armada 4110	$2,599	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	6	MFD
Compaq Computer Corp.	LTE 5250	$3,799	P120	16MB/80MB	810MB	10.4 AM	7.4	MFD
Compaq Computer Corp.	Armada 4120T	$3,899	P120	16MB/48MB	1.08GB	11.8 AM	6.1	MFD
Comtrade Computer	Stereo SVGA CD-Note	$2,625	P133	16MB/40MB	1.08GB	11.3 AM	7	MCD, MFD
CTX International	EzBook 710CS	$2,499	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	12.1 DS	6.6	MCD, MFD, CB
CTX International	EzBook 720CS	$2,799	P120	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 DS	6.6	MCD, MFD, CB
CTX International	EzBook 730CDT	$3,499	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	6.6	MCD, MFD, CB
Cypress Computer	54D1	$2,050	P100	16MB/64MB	1GB	11.3 DS	7.7	FCD, MFD
Cypress Computer	68D6	$2,750	P166	16MB/64MB	1GB	12.1 DS	7.5	FCD, MFD, WT
Cypress Computer	97T1	$2,800	P100	16MB/80MB	1GB	12.1 AM	6.3	FCD, MFD, WT, ZV

Note: Contact vendors for information on PC Card slot configurations and bundled software. **AM** = active-matrix; **CB** = CardBus; **DET** = detachable screen; **DS** = dual-scan passive-matrix; **EFD** = external floppy drive; **FCD** = fixed internal CD-ROM drive; **FFD** = fixed internal floppy drive; **IM** = internal modem; **MCD** = modular/swappable internal CD-ROM drive; **MFD** = modular/swappable internal floppy drive; **MO** = modem; **PC** = PC Card modem; **RUG** = rugged/ruggedized; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT**= wavetable audio, **ZV** = Zoomed Video; * =info. not provided

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PC WORLD BEST BUY — June 1996, WinBook XP5 P120 16/1.3GB Active Matrix

EDITORS' CHOICE AWARD — January 1996 PC Laptop Editor's Choice — WinBook XP, XP5

CBG &H BEST BUY — Laptop Buyer's Guide May 1996, WinBook XP5 P120 16/1.3GB TFT

OCTOBER 1996 BYTE BEST VALUE NOTEBOOK WINBOOK FX — October 1996 BYTE Best Best Value Notebook WinBook FX

PC WORLD BEST BUY — April 1996 WinBook XP5 P120 16/1.3GB Active Matrix

NSTL PC Digest 4-Star Rating ★★★★ — August 1996 WinBook FX P133

WINDOWS MAGAZINE RECOMMENDED — November 1996 Windows Recommended WinBook FX/P133

PC MAGAZINE EDITORS' CHOICE — August 1996 PC Magazine Editors' Choice WinBook XP5 P100

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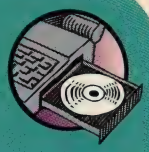
6X CD-ROM
NP8620



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NP8320

PENTIUM® PROCESSOR	10.4" VGA DUAL SCAN	10.4" SVGA ACTIVE MATRIX
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120MHz	$1895	$2075
133MHz	$1945	$2125

NP8620

PENTIUM® PROCESSOR	12.1" SVGA DUAL SCAN	11.3" SVGA ACTIVE MATRIX	12.1" SVGA ACTIVE MATRIX
100MHz	$2075	$2295	$2595
120MHz	$2095	$2345	$2645
133MHz	$2145	$2395	$2695
150MHz	$2225	$2475	$2775
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PCMCIA

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Ethernet	$ 85
MPEG-1 (NP8620)	$ 199

PCI
LOCAL BUS
VIDEO & HDD
NP8620

NP8100/8320

- Internal 6X CD-ROM (NP8320)
- Intel Pentium® Processor
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- 32-Bit PCI Local Bus Video
- 32-Bit Local Bus IDE
- 8MB EDO RAM, Expandable to 40MB
- Removable 1.0GB Hard Drive (1.3GB or 2.1GB opt.)
- 10.4" Dual Scan VGA or 10.4" Active Matrix SVGA Display
- Simultaneous CRT & LCD operation
- Built-In 3.5" 1.44MB FDD
- 16-bit Stereo Sound with 2 Stereo Speakers and 1 Microphone
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
- Advanced Power Management
- 1 Type III & 1 Type II PCMCIA slots
- Rechargeable NiMH Battery Pack
- Infra Red, Wireless "IR" Interface
- 1 16C550 Compatible Serial Port
- 1 Parallel Port with ECP/EEP Support
- Other Ports: Game/MIDI; Ext. Keyboard; Ext. CRT & Connector for Docking Station
- Jacks: 1 Line-in, 1 Line-out & 1 Microphone
- A4 Size 86-Key Windows 95 Keyboard for Easy Typing
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Carrying Bag & AC Adapter
- Weight: 7.9lbs with Battery
- 11.81"W x 8.94"D x 2.13"H
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

Options

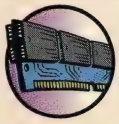
- Battery Charger
- Car Adapter
- Numeric keypad
- Mini Docking Station
- MPEG-1 Card

NP8620

- Internal 5.25" 6X CD-ROM Drive
- Intel Pentium® Processor
- 256KB L2 Pipeline Burst Synchronous Cache
- 2MB Video RAM
- 64-Bit PCI Local Bus Video
- PCI Local Bus HDD Controller
- 8MB EDO RAM, Expandable to 40MB
- Removable 1.0GB Hard Drive (1.3GB or 2.1GB opt.)
- Suspend to HDD Feature
- 12.1" Dual Scan or 11.3"/12.1" Active Matrix 800x600 SVGA Display
- Simultaneous CRT & LCD operation
- Built-In 3.5" 1.44MB FDD
- 16-bit Stereo Sound with 2 Stereo Speakers and 1 Microphone
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
- Advanced Power Management
- 1 Type III & 1 Type II PCMCIA slots which supports ZV-Port & Card Bus
- Rechargeable NiMH Battery Pack
- Infra Red, Wireless "IR" Interface
- 1 16C550 Compatible Serial Port
- 1 Parallel Port with ECP/EEP Support
- TV-Out Port
- Other Ports: Game/MIDI; Ext. Keyboard; Ext. CRT & 176 Pin connector for Docking Station
- Jacks: 1 Line-in, 1 Line-out & 1 Microphone
- A4 Size 86-Key Windows 95 Keyboard for Easy Typing
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Carrying Bag & AC Adapter
- Weight: 7.9lbs with Battery
- 11.81"w x 8.94"d x 2.13"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

Options

- Battery Charger
- Car Adapter
- Numeric Keypad
- Mini Docking Station
- TV-Out Cable



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intel inside pentium PROCESSOR

MOBILE [computing]

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	CPU	STD./MAX. RAM	HARD DRIVE	SCREEN (DIAG., IN.)	WGT. (LBS.)	EXTRAS
Dell Computer Corp.	Latitude LM P100 SD	$2,499	P100	24MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	6.9	MCD, MFD
Dell Computer Corp.	Latitude LM P133 ST	$2,999	P133	16MB/40MB	810MB	12.1 AM	6.9	MCD, MFD
Dell Computer Corp.	Latitude LM P133 ST	$3,499	P133	40MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	6.9	MCD, MFD
Dell Computer Corp.	Latitude XPi 150ST	$4,399	P150	24MB/48MB	810MB	12.1 AM	7.1	FCD, FFD, CB
DFI	6600	$3,999	P133	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.9	FCD, FFD
Digital Equipment Corp.	HiNote VP 520	$2,499	P120	8MB/40MB	1.08GB	11.3 DS	7.1	MCD, MFD
Digital Equipment Corp.	HiNote VP 525	$2,999	P120	8MB/40MB	1.08GB	11.3 AM	7.1	MCD, MFD
Digital Equipment Corp.	HiNote Ultra II LTS 5133	$4,799	P133	16MB/56MB	1.35GB	11.3 AM	4	EFD
Digital Equipment Corp.	HiNote Ultra II LTS 5150	$5,099	P150	16MB/56MB	1.44GB	11.3 AM	4	EFD
Dolch Computer Systems	Notepac	$10,995	P100	8MB/32MB	1GB	12.1 AM	12.9	RUG, FFD
EPS Technologies	Apex E-120	$1,795	P120	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	6.5	MFD
EPS Technologies	Apex ES-120	$2,095	P120	16MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	6.5	MCD, MFD
EPS Technologies	Apex E-120	$2,295	P120	8MB/72MB	810MB	12.1 AM	7	MFD
Ergo/The Brick Computer	CD-PowerBrick 120T	$2,895	P120	16MB/40MB	1.4GB	11.3 AM	6.2	14.4 PC, MDC (6x), MFD
Ergo/The Brick Computer	CD-PowerBrick 133	$3,395	P133	16MB/40MB	1.4GB	12.1 AM	7	14.4 PC, FCD, FFD
Ergo/The Brick Computer	CD-Black Brick	$4,995	P200	32MB/72MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	7.5	33.6 PC, FCD, MFD, WT, CB, ZV
Eurocom Corp.	5400P	$4,350	P166	24MB/64MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.5	FCD (6x), FFD, WT
Everex Systems	StepNote Plus	$1,995	P100	8MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 DS	6.2	MFD
Everex Systems	StepNote Plus	$3,295	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	11.3 AM	6.2	MCD, MFD
Everhan/Jinco Computers	PA 8000 GA	$2,920	P133	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	11.3 AM	6.4	MFD, WT
FieldWorks	FW5000P	$5,995	P100	8MB/128MB	810MB	10.4 AM	11	RUG, MFD
FieldWorks	FW5033P	$6,495	P133	8MB/128MB	810MB	10.4 AM	11	RUG, MFD
FOSA Computer	AP8110D	$2,050	P100	16MB /40MB	1GB	10.4 DS	7.1	28.8 PC, FCD, FFD
FOSA Computer	AP8312T	$2,350	P120	16MB/40MB	1GB	10.4 AM	7.1	28.8 PC, FCD, FFD
FOSA Computer	AP5413T	$2,700	P133	16MB/32MB	1.35GB	10.4 AM	7.7	28.8 PC, FCD, MFD
FOSA Computer	AP5416A	$3,350	P166	24MB/32MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	7.7	28.8 PC, FCD, MFD
Fujitsu PC Corp.	Monte Carlo	$3,149	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 AM	7.3	28.8 PC, FCD, MFD
Fujitsu PC Corp.	Monte Carlo	$4,649	P133	16MB/48MB	1GB	12.1 AM	7.3	28.8 PC, FCD, MFD
FutureTech Systems	FM5820T	$3,429	P200	16MB/64MB	1GB	12.1 AM	6.7	28.8 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
FutureTech Systems	FM5813T	$2,995	P133	16MB/64MB	1GB	12.1 AM	6.7	28.8 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
Gateway 2000	Solo 2100 S5-100	$2,699	P100	16MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 AM	6.5	MCD (6x), MFD, ZV
Gateway 2000	Solo 2100 S5-120	$3,499	P120	16MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 AM	6.5	MCD (6x), MFD, ZV
Gateway 2000	Solo 2100 S5-133	$5,249	P133	40MB/40MB	1.2GB	12.1 AM	6.5	28.8 PC, MCD (6x), MFD, ZV
Hertz Computer Corp.	Z-OptiMedia	$2,875	P100	16MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 AM	7	FCD, FFD
Hewlett-Packard Co.	800CT 5/133 1440	$4,850	P133	16MB/48MB	1.44GB	10.4 AM	3.75	CB
Hewlett-Packard Co.	5500 CTS	$5,220	P133	16MB/64MB	2GB	12.1 DS	7.5	EFD
Hi-Tech USA	CD-ROM Notebook	$2,698	P133	16MB/32MB	1GB	10.4 AM	8	28.8 PC, MCD, MFD
Hitachi PC Corp.	E-100D	$1,999	P100	8MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 DS	5.8	28.8 IM, MFD
Hitachi PC Corp.	E-133T	$2,999	P133	16MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 AM	5.8	28.8 IM, MFD
Hitachi PC Corp.	C-120T	$3,199	P120	8MB/40MB	1GB	11.8 AM	5.3	28.8 IM, MFD
Hitachi PC Corp.	M-120T	$4,499	P120	16MB/48MB	1GB	11.8 AM	7	28.8 IM, MCD, MFD
Hitachi PC Corp.	M-133T	$4,999	P133	16MB/48MB	1GB	11.8 AM	7	28.8 IM, MCD, MFD
IBM Corp.	ThinkPad 560	$2,699	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	4.1	EFD
IBM Corp.	ThinkPad 560	$3,749	P120	8MB/40MB	810MB	12.1 AM	4.1	EFD
IBM Corp.	ThinkPad 560	$4,199	P133	8MB/40MB	1.2GB	12.1 AM	4.1	EFD
IBM Corp.	ThinkPad 365XD	*	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 DS	6.2	FCD, EFD
IBM Corp.	ThinkPad 760EL	*	P133	32MB/104MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	6.4	MFD
IBM Corp.	ThinkPad 760ED	*	P133	16MB/104MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	6.7	28.8 IM, MCD, MFD, CB
Itronix	X-C 6000	$5,440	P100	8MB/16MB	1GB	8.2 DS	6.5	RUG, 28.8 MO, CB
Keydata International	Keynote GT Plus	$2,195	P120	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	7.4	14.4 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
Keydata International	Keynote GT Plus	$2,245	P133	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	7.4	14.4 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
Keydata International	Keynote GT Plus	$2,395	P120	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 AM	7.4	14.4 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
Keydata International	Keynote XP	$3,595	P133	16MB/48MB	1GB	13.3 AM	6.95	28.8 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
Kiwi Computer	OpenNote 180c	$1,595	Cx5x86/100	16MB/32MB	1.1GB	10.4 DS	5.8	33.6 IM, FFD
Kiwi Computer	OpenNote 680c	$3,395	P133	32MB/64MB	2GB	11.3 AM	6	MCD, MFD
Lexington Computer Research	OHP-5300	$4,080	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	10.4 AM	5	MCD (6x), MFD

Note: Contact vendors for information on PC Card slot configurations and bundled software. **AM** = active-matrix; **CB** = CardBus; **DET** = detachable screen; **DS** = dual-scan passive-matrix; **EFD** = external floppy drive; **FCD** = fixed internal CD-ROM drive; **FFD** = fixed internal floppy drive; **IM** = internal modem; **MCD** = modular/swappable internal CD-ROM drive; **MFD** = modular/swappable internal floppy drive; **MO** = modem; **PC** = PC Card modem; **RUG** = rugged/ruggedized; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT**=wavetable audio; **ZV** = Zoomed Video; * =info. not provided

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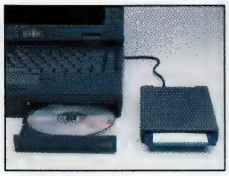

3.5" FDD module runs simultaneously with CD-ROM drive

"...an attractive array of features and options."

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KEYNOTE 8560

4/96

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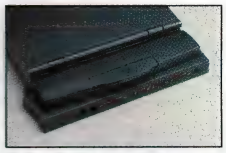
- TouchPad pointing device
- Built-in microphone & speakers
- 16-bit Sound Blaster Pro compatible
- 1 type III and 1 type II PCMCIA slots
- 16550 serial & EPP/ECP parallel port
- HP compatible, IrDA compliant infrared serial port
- Smart Bay that accepts 6X/8X CD-ROM, FDD, 2nd battery, or 2nd HDD
- Rechargeable Ni-MH battery
- 12.0"(W)x9.1"(D)x2.2"(H)
- MS DOS & Windows 3.11, or Windows 95



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MOBILE [computing]

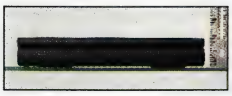
COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	CPU	STD./MAX. RAM	HARD DRIVE	SCREEN (DIAG., IN.)	WGT. (LBS.)	EXTRAS
Lexington Computer Research	Regatta 5200-Pentium CD	$4,755	P120	8MB/32MB	1.2GB	12.1 AM	6.9	FCD (4x), MFD
Maximus Computers	PowerMax MediaNote	$2,199	P100	16MB/64MB	1.08GB	11.3 DS	7.8	MCD, MFD
Maximus Computers	PowerMax MediaNote	$2,249	P120	16MB/64MB	1.08GB	11.3 DS	7.8	MCD, MFD
Maximus Computers	PowerMax MediaNote	$2,349	P133	16MB/64MB	1.08GB	11.3 DS	7.8	MCD, MFD
Maximus Computers	PowerMax MediaNote	$2,649	P120	16MB/64MB	1.08GB	11.3 AM	7.8	MCD, MFD
Maximus Computers	PowerMax MediaNote	$2,749	P133	16MB/64MB	1.08GB	11.3 AM	7.8	MCD, MFD
MaxTech Corp./GVC	Yesbook X753T	$3,095	P133	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	11.3 AM	7	FCD, FFD
MD & I	Submarine M3	$3,469	P120	16MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 AM	6.5	28.8 PC, MCD, MFD
Mega Image Systems	MegaBook 880 Ruby	$1,549	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 DS	6.1	FFD
Mega Image Systems	MegaBook 880 Diamond	$1,749	P100	16MB/40MB	1GB	10.4 DS	6.1	FFD
Mega Image Systems	MegaBook 911 Silver	$1,999	P100	16MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	6.5	MCD, MFD
Micro Express	NP133A	$2,795	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.9	28.8 PC, FCD, FFD
Micron Electronics	Millennia TransPort	$4,399	P133	16MB/48MB	1.2GB	12.1 AM	6.9	MCD (8x), MFD
Micron Electronics	Millennia TransPort	$5,199	P133	16MB/48MB	1.2GB	12.1 AM	6.9	MCD (8x), MFD
Micron Electronics	Millennia TransPort	$5,548	P133	32MB/48MB	1.2GB	12.1 AM	6.9	MCD (8x), MFD
Micron Electronics	Millennia TransPort	$6,150	P150	32MB/48MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	6.9	MCD (8x), MFD
Modgraph	Guardian Lite	$4,530	P133	8MB/64MB	810MB	11.3 AM	7.5	MCD, MFD
Modgraph	Guardian Plus	$9,780	P133	8MB/64MB	810MB	11.3 AM	15	FCD, FFD
NEC Technologies	Versa 2400	$2,199	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	7.2	MFD
NEC Technologies	Versa 2400CD	$2,699	P100	16MB/40MB	1.08GB	11.3 DS	7.2	MCD (6x), MFD
NEC Technologies	Versa 2430CD	$2,999	P133	16MB/48MB	1.08GB	11.3 DS	7.2	MCD (6x), FFD
NEC Technologies	Versa 4230	$3,899	P133	16MB/40MB	1.08GB	10.4 AM	6.6	MCD (6x), MFD
NEC Technologies	Versa 6000H	$3,999	P100	16MB/48MB	1.08GB	11.3 AM	6.9	28.8 IM, MCD, MFD, WT, CB
Noteable Service	PLT-166 Pentium	$3,195	P166	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 AM	7.2	28.8 IM, FCD, MFD, TV
Olivetti Personal Computers	Echos P100C	$2,299	P100	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	11.3 DS	6.2	MCD (6x), MFD
Olivetti Personal Computers	Echos P100E	$2,799	P100	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	10.4 AM	6.4	MCD (6x), MFD
Olivetti Personal Computers	Echos P120E	$3,599	P120	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	11.3 AM	6.7	MCD (6x), MFD
Olivetti Personal Computers	Echos P133S	$4,599	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	11.8 AM	6.5	MCD (6x), MFD
Panasonic	CF-62 CJ82AAM	$4,679	P100	16MB/48MB	810MB	12.1 AM	9.8	FCD/PD (4x) , MFD, CB
ProStar Computer	8360D-16-810	$1,795	P100	8MB/32MB	810MB	10.4 DS	7.9	33.6 PC, MCD, MFD, CB
ProStar Computer	8362T-16-810	$2,045	P120	16MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 AM	7.9	33.6 PC, MCD, MFD, CB
ProStar Computer	5260C-16-1350	$2,145	P100	16MB/32MB	1.35MB	11.3 DS	7.7	33.6 PC, MCD (6x), MFD, CB
ProStar Computer	8362T-16-1350	$2,195	P120	16MB/40MB	1.35GB	10.4 AM	7.9	33.6 PC, MCD, MFD, CB
ProStar Computer	5263S-16-1350	$2,395	P133	16MB/32MB	1.35GB	10.4 AM	7.7	33.6 PC, MCD (6x), MFD, CB
Revered Technology	P120-880	$5,995	P120	8MB/32MB	2.1GB	10.4 AM	6.6	FFD, DET
Royal Computer	Mobile Media Pro	$3,095	P166	16MB/64MB	1GB	12.1 AM	8	FCD, FFD
Sager Midern Computer	NP 8620	$3,195	P166	40MB/40MB	2.16GB	12.1 AM	7.9	FCD, FFD, CB
Samsung Electronics	Sens 810	$2,499	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	7.4	MCD (4x), MFD
Samsung Electronics	Sens 810	$3,499	P100	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.7	MCD (6x), MFD
Samsung Electronics	Sens 810	$3,999	P120	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.7	MCD (6x), MFD
Samsung Electronics	Sens 810	$4,599	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.7	MCD (6x), MFD
Samsung Electronics	Sens 810	$4,999	P133	16MB/40MB	2.1GB	12.1 AM	7.7	28.8 PC, MCD (6x), MFD
Sceptre Technologies	SoundX Series 4000	$5,498	P133	8MB/40MB	810MB	12.1 AM	7.3	28.8 PC, MCD, MFD
Sceptre Technologies	SoundX Series 4000	$5,728	P133	8MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.3	28.8 PC, MCD, MFD
Sharp Electronics Corp.	PC-9080	$5,999	P133	16MB/48MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.3	28.8 IM, MCD (6x), MFD
Texas Instruments	Extensa 510	$1,799	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 DS	5.9	MFD
Texas Instruments	Extensa 570CDT	$2,999	P100	8MB/40MB	1.2GB	10.4 AM	6.4	MCD, MFD
Texas Instruments	TravelMate 6020	$4,199	P120	8MB/72MB	1.08GB	11.3 AM	5.9	28.8 IM, MFD
Texas Instruments	TravelMate 6030	$4,999	P133	16MB/72MB	1.35MB	12.1 AM	6	28.8 IM, MFD, CB
Texas Instruments	TravelMate 6050	$5,499	P150	16MB/72MB	1.35MB	12.1 AM	6	28.8 IM, MFD, CB
Top Data	Nacom N5100	$2,275	P100	16MB/64MB	810MB	10.4 AM	6.8	MCD (4x), MFD
Toshiba America	Satellite 110CS	$2,299	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	6.9	*
Toshiba America	Satellite Pro 420CDS	$2,999	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	7.1	MCD (6x)
Toshiba America	Portege 650CD	$4,499	P133	16MB/80MB	1.3GB	11.3 AM	4.8	*
Toshiba America	Tecra 500CDT	$4,999	P120	16MB/144MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	7.9	MCD (6x)
Toshiba America	Tecra 730CDT	*	P150	16MB/144MB	2.0GB	12.1 AM	7.9	MCD (6x), IM

Note: Contact vendors for information on PC Card slot configurations and bundled software. **AM** = active-matrix; **CB** = CardBus; **DET** = detachable screen; **DS** = dual-scan passive-matrix; **EFD** = external floppy drive; **FCD** = fixed internal CD-ROM drive; **FFD** = fixed internal floppy drive; **IM** = internal modem; **MCD** = modular/swappable internal CD-ROM drive; **MFD** = modular/swappable internal floppy drive; **MO** = modem; **PC** = PC Card modem; **RUG** = rugged/ruggedized; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT=** wavetable audio, **ZV** = Zoomed Video; * =info. not provided

(continued on page 82)

This powerful 166MHz notebook is also a 13.3" personal traveling theater.

Keynote XP 8660. Packed with the powerful 166 MHz Pentium processor and an amazing array of features, you can zip through spreadsheets and all those CPU intensive applications with ease.



Keynote XP 8660, only 1.8" thick

And the XP 8660 is equipped to suit your multimedia needs too. Its super-sized 13.3" XGA screen displays images at 1024x768 resolution, so you see the sharpest image possible. To top it off, the XP 8660 also includes built-in video capture and software MPEG functions which allow you to record and play back full-motion videos in real time.

IrDA interface, KB/CRT connector, serial port, parallel port (to printer or external FDD) . . . and connector to port replicator

Only 1.8" thick, the XP 8660 is faster and better because Keydata recognizes your needs. Continuing Keydata's tradition of feature-rich notebooks. Exceptional technology from an exceptional company that sets industry standards in quality and performance.

PCMCIA Cards

- Ethernet $85
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- Ethernet/28.8 fax modem combo $275

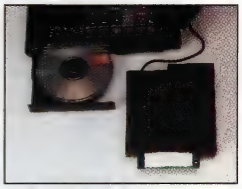
KEYNOTE XP 8660

13.3" Super-Large Display, 10X CD-ROM, Software MPEG & Video Capture Ready, Z-V Port/32-bit CardBus Ready.

Pentium Processor	12.1" SVGA Dual scan	12.1" SVGA Active	13.3" XGA Active
120 MHz	$2095	$2775	$3275
133 MHz	$2195	$2875	$3375
150 MHz	$2305	$2985	$3485
166 MHz	$2395	$3075	$3575

Above prices include **16 MB RAM**, **1.0 GB hard drive**, and **Windows 95**. Please call for custom configuration options and the latest pricing.

- Intel Pentium 120/133/150 /166MHz processor
- 256KB level 2 pipeline-burst cache sync. memory
- 2 MB video RAM
- 16 MB RAM; upgradeable to 24/32/48/80 MB
- Removable 1.0 GB HDD; 810MB, 1.3GB, & 1.8GB optional
- Accelerated 64-bit PCI bus
- 12.1" SVGA dual-scan or 12.1" SVGA active or 13.3" XGA active LCD display
- Removable 3.5" FDD
- Optional 6X/10X CD-ROM drive
- 19mm pitch Windows 95 keyboard
- TouchPad pointing device
- 16-bit Sound Blaster Pro compatible
- Video capture/Zoomed-Video port
- Supports 2 type II or 1 type III 16-bit PCMCIA cards, or 32-bit CardBus cards
- 16550 serial & EPP/ECP parallel port
- HP compatible, IrDA compliant infrared serial port
- Smart Bay that accepts FDD, 6X/10X CD-ROM, or 2nd battery
- LCD function/status indicator
- High capacity Ni-MH battery
- MS DOS & Windows 3.11, or Windows 95



Removable 3.5" FDD drive fits in the Smart Bay, or run simultaneously with CD-ROM drive

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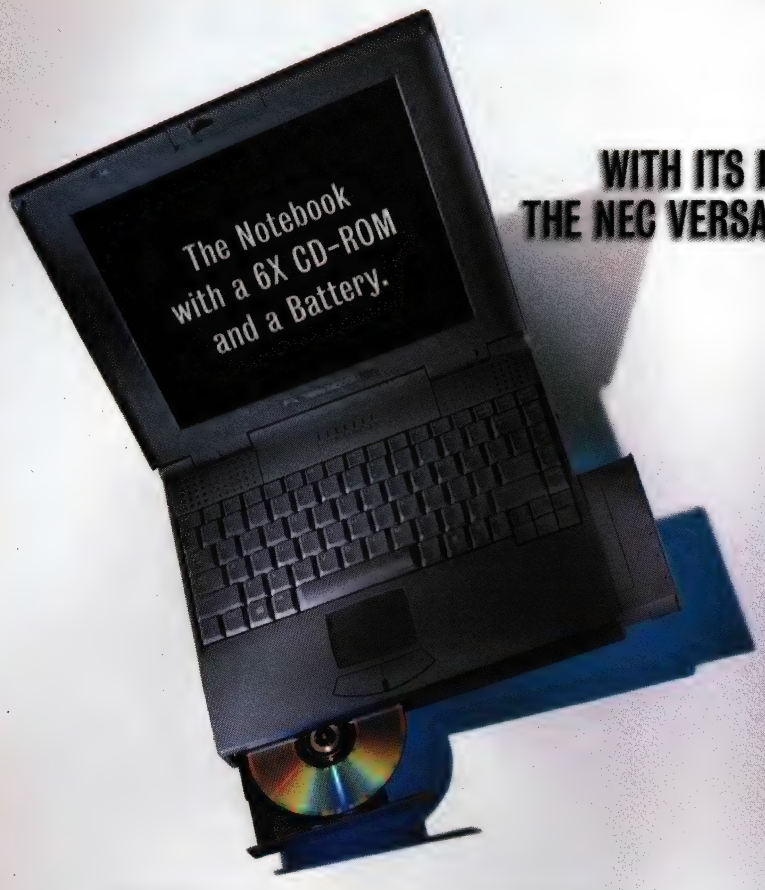

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Just slip the 6X CD-ROM drive and battery into the two modular VersaBay™ slots, and your NEC Versa® 2400 changes into a state-of-the-art multimedia tool for brilliant on-the-road presentations.

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Intel Pentium® Processor up to 133MHz

Up to 16MB EDO DRAM

Up to 1.08GB hard drive

11.3" DSTN color display

*Two VersaBay slots***

Two high-output stereo speakers

Two PC Card slots

MPEG video

SEE, HEAR AND FEEL THE DIFFERENCE.™

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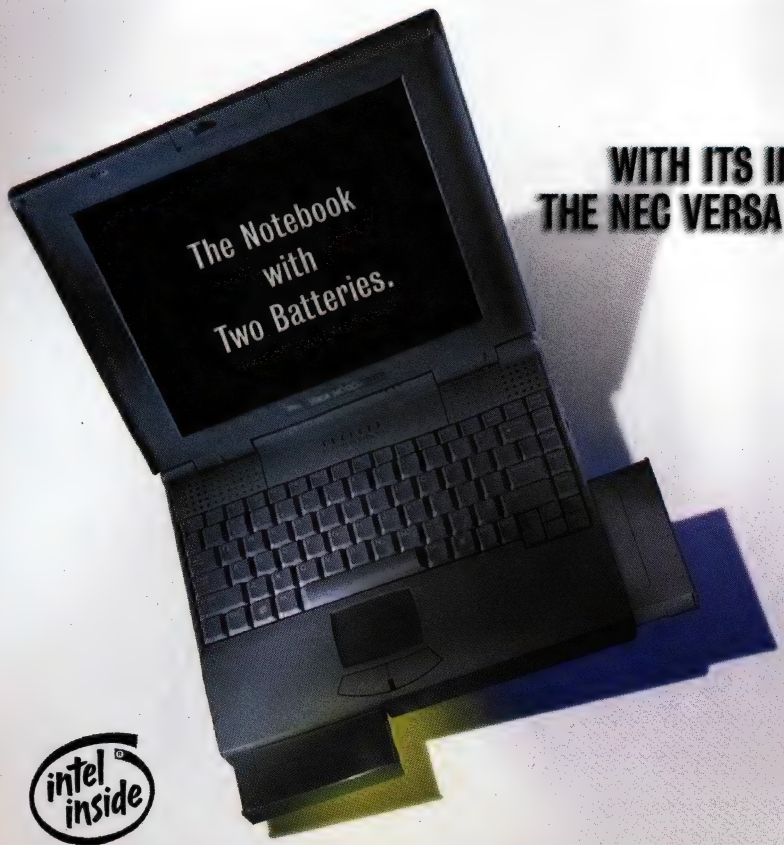

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Just insert both batteries† into the two modular VersaBay slots, and your NEC Versa 2400 becomes a notebook with enough juice for up to 6 hours of nonstop computing.

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Intel Pentium® Processor up to 133MHz

Up to 16MB EDO DRAM

Up to 1.08GB hard drive

11.3" DSTN color display

*Two VersaBay slots***

Two high-output stereo speakers

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MPEG video

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Pop the battery and the floppy drive into the two modular VersaBay slots, and your NEC Versa 2400 turns into a notebook that will effortlessly store and transfer data wherever you are.

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Intel Pentium® Processor up to 133MHz

Up to 16MB EDO DRAM

Up to 1.08GB hard drive

11.3" DSTN color display

*Two VersaBay slots***

Two high-output stereo speakers

Two PC Card slots

MPEG video

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WITH ITS INTERCHANGEABLE COMPONENTS, THE NEC VERSA 2400 IS ACTUALLY 4 NOTEBOOKS IN 1.

Slide the 6X CD-ROM drive and the floppy drive into the two modular VersaBay slots. On AC power, your NEC Versa 2400 transforms into a powerful multimedia notebook that will rival a desktop computer.

*NEC Versa 2400 Series, starting at $2199**

Intel Pentium® Processor up to 133MHz

Up to 16MB EDO DRAM

Up to 1.08GB hard drive

11.3" DSTN color display

*Two VersaBay slots***

Two high-output stereo speakers

Two PC Card slots

MPEG video

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SPEED UP TO THE

◆ ***Pentium TCP module CPU-***
The 2.9V Intel's Pentium tape carrier package (TCP) CPU, which weights under 1 gram and sizes only 29 Square millimeters, has been designed especially for notebook computer operation to offer superior thermal resistance characteristic and greatly reduces power consumption over regular PGA type CPU; therefore, ***your notebook is running cooler and faster.***

◆ ***EDO Memory-***
Accelerate your notebook performance by using EDO (Extended Data Out) DRAM. Data retrieval time is faster by allowing data access cycles to overlap and increases memory access speed by at least 30%.

◆ ***Pipeline Burst Cache-***
Data access time improves over standard cache Ram by reducing data access cycle, and increasing data transfer rate. Together with EDO memory, data retrieval bottleneck will be removed.

◆ ***12.1"Super VGA Resolution***
Increase viewable information by 50% by increasing resolution to 800 x 600. Graphic access time is also increase by using PCI bus video. You would have more and faster windows in your Windows 95.

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- 1.44 Floppy Disk Drive
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- 1.0 GB HDD
- 2 MB Flash ROM
- 1.44 Floppy Disk Drive
- 16-Bit Audio Sound
- 1 type II & 1 type III PCMCIA slots
- 1 HP IrDA Compatible IR (Infrared) Port
- Windows 95 or Dos & Win 3.11

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- Intel Pentium-100Mhz (2.9V TCP Module)
- 11.3" Dual Scan 800 x 600 SVGA
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- 1 MB PCI Video Bus
- 810 MB HDD
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- 1.44 Floppy Disk Drive
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- 1.0 GB HDD
- 6X CD ROM Swappable with FDD
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Twinhead Corp.	Slimnote 713TV	$2,895	P133	16MB/40MB	1.44GB	11.3 AM	5	FFD
Twinhead Corp.	Slimnote 9133TZ	$3,995	P133	16MB/64MB	1.44GB	12.1 AM	6.5	33.6 IM, FCD (10x), FFD
Wedge Technology	Showbiz 5000	$2,100	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	11.3 DS	8	MCD, MFD
Wedge Technology	Showbiz 5000	$2,300	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 AM	8	MCD, MFD
Wedge Technology	Showbiz 5000	$2,700	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	12.1 AM	8	MCD, MFD
Wedge Technology	Showbiz 5000	$3,400	P133	40MB/40MB	2.1GB	11.3 DS	8	28.8 PC, MCD, MFD
WinBook Computer Corp.	WinBook XP5	$2,399	P100	16MB/32MB	810MB	10.4 AM	6.2	14.4 IM, FFD
WinBook Computer Corp.	WinBook XP5	$2,699	P120	16MB/32MB	810MB	10.4 AM	6.2	14.4 IM, FFD
WinBook Computer Corp.	WinBook XP5	$2,999	P133	16MB/32MB	1.3GB	10.4 AM	6.2	28.8 IM, FFD
WinBook Computer Corp.	WinBook FX	$3,399	P120	16MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 AM	7.1	28.8 IM, FCD (6x), MFD
WinBook Computer Corp.	WinBook FX	$3,599	P133	16MB/40MB	1GB	11.3 AM	7.1	28.8 IM, FCD (6x), MFD
Zenith Data Systems Direct	Z-Star MX	$2,599	P100	8MB/40MB	810MB	10.4 AM	5.9	MFD
Zenith Data Systems Direct	Z-Star GX	$3,999	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	6.9	MCD, MFD
Zenith Data Systems Direct	Z-Note 6000	$4,999	P133	16MB/40MB	1.3GB	12.1 AM	6.9	28.8 IM, MCD (6x), MFD
Zenon Technology	P-Note 2000	$3,199	P166	16MB/64MB	1GB	12.1 AM	7	33.6 PC, FCD, FFD
Zenon Technology	P-Note 2000	$3,079	P166	16MB/64MB	1GB	12.1 AM	7	28.8 MO, FCD, FFD

Note: Contact vendors for information on PC Card slot configurations and bundled software. **AM** = active-matrix; **CB** = CardBus; **DET** = detachable screen; **DS** = dual-scan passive-matrix; **EFD** = external floppy drive; **FCD** = fixed internal CD-ROM drive; **FFD** = fixed internal floppy drive; **IM** = internal modem; **MCD** = modular/swappable internal CD-ROM drive; **MFD** = modular/swappable internal floppy drive; **MO** = modem; **PC** = PC Card modem; **RUG** = rugged/ruggedized; **TV** = TV tuner; **WT**=wavetable audio; **ZV** = Zoomed Video; * =info. not provided

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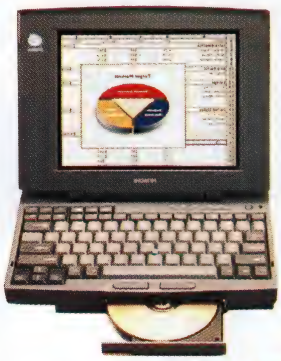

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- Battery Pack (NiHM).....$ 67

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M100T	100MHz	8/40MB	720MB	10.4" Active	4X	–	CALL
M120T	120MHz	16/48MB	1GB	11.8" Active	4X	$168	$ 4,499
M133T	133MHz	16/48MB	1GB	11.8" Active	6X	$186	$ 4,999

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- 1MB video memory
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- 16MB Memory Module.....$ 264
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- Battery Pack (NiHM).....$ 99
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- 810MB Hard Disk Drive.....$ 349
- E-Series Port Replicator.....$ 199

Model	CPU	Ram	Hard Drive	Display	LEASE	Price
E100D	100MHz	8/40MB	810MB	11.3" Dual	$75	$ 1,999
E133T	133MHz	16/40MB	810MB	11.3" Active	$112	$ 2,999
C100T	100MHz	8/40MB	720MB	10.4" Active	$77	$ 2,049
C120T	120MHz	8/40MB	1GB	11.8" Active	$119	$ 3,199

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PC MAGAZINE EDITORS' CHOICE August 1996

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- Integrated 14.4K bps data and fax modem
- PC Card slots, two Type II or one Type III
- Integrated ESS 16-bit Sound Blaster® compatible audio and built-in speakers

Ascentia J Series

Model	CPU	Ram Std/Max	Hard Drive	CD ROM	Display	LEASE	Price
J30	100MHz	8/40MB	800MB	–	10.4" Dual	$77	$ 2,063
J30	100MHz	8/40MB	800MB	–	10.4" Active	$91	$ 2,439
J50	133MHz	8/40MB	800MB	–	10.4" Active	$102	$ 2,719
P30	100MHz	8/40MB	800MB	–	11.3" Dual	$89	$ 2,392
P40	120MHz	16/40MB	1.0GB	–	11.3" Active	$124	$ 3,332
P50	133MHz	8/40MB	800MB	4X	11.3" Active	$131	$ 3,514
P50	133MHz	8/40MB	1.2GbMB	4X	11.3" Active	$157	$ 4,205

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WideNote Series

- 120MHz or 133MHz Pentium® Processor
- 16MB RAM std., 32MB max.
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- 16KB L1 Cache, 256K L2 Cache
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- 64-bit PCI Bus, 2MB
- 28.8 Kbaud Voice/Fax
- 16-bit SoundBlaster Compatible Sound, Stereo Speakers
- Two Type II or One Type III PC Card Slots
- 4.2 lbs.
- 3-year parts and Labor and 1 year SharpFast Warranty

Model	CPU	Ram Std/Max	Hard Drive	Display	LEASE	Price
W100D	120MHz	16/32MB	1.1GB	11.52" Dual	$114	$ 3,049
W100T	133MHz	16/32MB	1.1GB	11.52" Active	$133	$ 3,559

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- 16MB RAM std., 48MB max.
- 1.3GB Removable Hard Disc Drive
- 256K synchronous L2 Cache
- 12.1" Active Matrix Display
- XGA, 1024 x 768 resolution
- GlidePoint™ pointer – the latest technology, the easiest to use
- Built-in 16-bit SoundBlaster Compatible Sound, Microphone & 2 Speakers
- One Type III or Two Type II PC Card Slots
- 6X Removable CD ROM Drive
- 64-bit PCI Bus, 2MB
- 28.8 Kbps Voice/Fax modem
- Dual Battery capabilities
- 3-year warranty/1 year SharpFast exchange

Model	CPU	Ram Std/Max	Hard Drive	CD ROM	Display	LEASE	Price
PC3040	100MHz	8/40MB	1.1GB	–	12.1" Dual	$82	$ 2,199
PC9020	120MHz	16/40MB	1.1GB	6X	12.1" Dual	$112	$ 2,999
PC9030	120MHz	8/40MB	1.1GB	6X	11.3" Active	$138	$ 3,699
PC9050	133MHz	16/48MB	1.3GB	6X	11.3" Active	–	NEW
PC9070	133MHz	16/48MB	1.1GB	6X	12.1" Active	$170	$ 4,550

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- 1MB Video RAM
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- Pointpad Pointing Device
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- Windows '95 or Windows for Workgroups (dual install, select one at initial boot-up)

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Model	Ram	Hard Drive	CD-ROM	Display	LEASE	Price
P100C	8MB	1.3GB	6X	11.3" Dual	$85	$ 2,274
P100E	8MB	1.3GB	6X	10.4" Active	$104	$ 2,769
P120E	8MB	1.3GB	6X	11.3" Active	$133	$ 3,561
P133S	16MB	1.3GB	6X	11.8" Active	$170	$ 4,550

NEC Versa 6000H Series

- 100MHz Pentium® Processor
- 16MB RAM std., 48MB max.
- 1.08GB Hard Drive
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 6X CD-ROM Drive
- 11.3" TFT active-matrix color display
- Supports full-screen, full motion MPEG video
- Cellular-ready 28.8K bps data/fax modem

LEASE FOR $135 month

Versa 6000

$3,826

Model	CPU	RAM	Hard Drive	Display	LEASE	Price
6030H	133MHz	16MB	1.35GB	12.1" Active	$169	$ 4,783
6030X	133MHz	16MB	1.44GB	12.1" Active	$186	$ 5,399

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IBM

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- 810MB Hard Drive
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- 10.4" Dual-scan
- 16-bit stereo audio with built in speaker
- PCI system bus
- External 3.5", 1.44MB Floppy Disc Drive

LEASE FOR $72 month

$1,919

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ThinkPad 365

Model	CPU	Ram Std/Max	Hard Drive	CD ROM	Display	LEASE	Price
365XD	100MHz	8/40MB	810MB	4X	10.4" Dual	$72	$ 1,918
365X	100MHz	8/40MB	810MB	—	10.4" Active	$85	$ 2,274
365XD	120MHz	8/40MB	1.08GB	4X	11.3" Dual	$92	$ 2,456
365XD	120MHz	8/40MB	1.08GB	4X	10.4" Active	$106	$ 2,836

ThinkPad 760EL

IBM

- 100MHz Pentium® Processor
- 8MB RAM std., 72MB max.
- 810MB Hard Drive
- 16-bit stereo audio with Sound Blaster®
- Dual IrDA-compliant infrared ports
- 11.3" dual
- PCMCIA slots, two Type II or one Type III
- Lithium Ion rechargeable battery

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ThinkPad 760

Model	CPU	Ram	Hard Drive	CD ROM	Display	LEASE	Price
760EL	120MHz	8MB	810MB	optional	11.3" Dual	$121	$ 3,249
760ELD	100MHz	8MB	810MB	standard	12.1" Active	$160	$ 4,299
760EL	120MHz	8MB	1.08GB	optional	12.1" Active	$154	$ 4,118
760EL	133MHz	16MB	1.08GB	optional	12.1" Active	$179	$ 5,193

TOSHIBA Tecra 500CDT

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Tecra 500CS

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- 120 MHz Pentium® Processor
- 16MB EDO DRAM std., 144MB max.
- 1.26GB Removable Hard Drive
- 256KB Level 2 Cache
- 12.1" active-matrix (CDT) or 12.1" dual-scan (500CS)
- Integrated 6X CD-ROM Drive
- ZV card and CardBus ready (32 bit) card slots for two Type II or one Type III cards
- 16-bit Sound Blaster™ Pro compatible audio
- Built in 28.8K bps data/fax/voice modem
- Built in stereo speakers and audio jacks
- 32-bit PCI internal system bus and PCI external expansion bus

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Tecra 500

Tecra 500CDT

$4,899

LEASE FOR $183 month

Model	CPU	Ram	Hard Drive	CD ROM	Display	LEASE	Price
420CDS	100MHz	8MB	810MB	6X	11.3" Dual	$91	$ 2,420
420CDT	100MHz	8MB	1.26GB	6X	11.3" Active	$120	$ 3,211
720CDT	133MHz	16MB	1.26GB	6X	12.1" Active	$182	$ 5,279

TOSHIBA Portégé 650CT

LEASE FOR $163 month

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Portégé 650CT

- 133MHz Pentium® Processor
- 16MB EDO DRAM std., 80MB max.
- 1.26GB Hard Drive
- 256KB Level 2 Cache
- 11.3", 800 x 600 color active-matrix
- ZV card and CardBus ready card slots for two Type II or one Type III cards
- Built in 28.8K bps data/fax/voice modem
- 16-bit SoundBlaster™ Pro compatible audio
- Lithium Ion Battery

$4,356

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- 17" Trinitron CRT; 16" viewable image area
- .25mm Aperature Grille pitch
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- Color temperature control
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- Warranty: 3 years parts & labor, 2-yr CRT

TOSHIBA Tecra 730CDT

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Tecra 730CDT

- 150 MHz Intel Pentium® Processor
- 16MB RAM std., 144MB max.
- 2GB Removable Hard Drive
- 12.1" active-matrix display
- 6X CD-ROM
- 16KB internal cache, 256KB L2 cache
- Integrated 28.8K bps modem
- 2MB EDO video memory supports 64K colors at 1024 x 768
- Telephone features: full duplex speaker-phone; telepone answering machine
- Two Type II or One Type III PC Card Slots
- Integrated 16-bit steroe sound with built-in speakers and microphone

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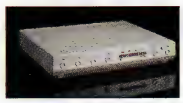

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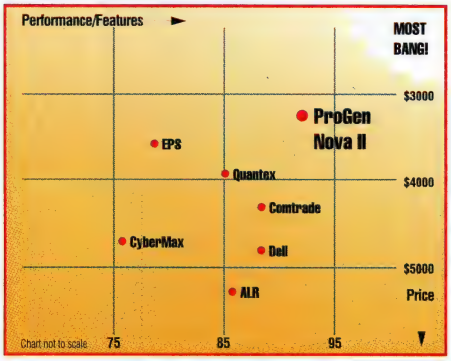

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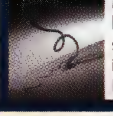

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MULTIMEDIA UPGRADES

Stepping Up in Sound

Replacing lackluster speakers and sound cards can give a big boost to multimedia performance.

Installing a new sound card used to be the quintessential PC headache. The job has gotten a lot easier, thanks to Windows 95's Plug and Play technology, which promises to make fiddling with jumpers a thing of the past. But a plethora of new audio-card features has made it trickier to choose the best card for your needs.

Almost any sound card will beep and blip through occasional games. But buying a high-quality audio board today involves wading through options such as wavetable synthesis, sample RAM, DSP-based real-time effects, and support for a dizzying array of MIDI and audio standards. Here are some pointers for audiophiles looking to upgrade their PCs' sound capabilities.

Making Noise

As with any PC purchase, the smart move is to step back and assess your requirements. If you're interested in voice-enabled applications like videoconferencing, speech recognition, or computer/telephony integration (CTI), then decent digital audio is more important than stunningly realistic MIDI music output. Excessive noise obscures speech and can confuse speech-recognition software, so look for a high signal-to-noise ratio and low quantization noise. You'll also want to be sure that the board's bundled mixer software includes flexible muting functions that let you eliminate noise leakage from sources such as an idling CD-ROM drive.

High-frequency response is another important parameter. Although conventional analog phone lines fall off at around 3.3KHz, videoconferencing and CTI applications that run over ISDN or LAN connections often support higher bandwidths. An extended high end improves speech-recognition accuracy and makes it easier to understand conferencing partners. Remember, though, that even boards with output beyond 20KHz require an acceptable microphone to produce quality results. In mission-critical applications it can be a good idea to replace the inexpensive mikes bundled with many sound cards.

One final feature to look for is full-duplex audio, which lets a sound card simultaneously handle audio input and output. This enables both parties to speak at once in a phone call or videoconference, and lets callers interrupt voice menus in CTI applications such as interactive voice-response and voice-messaging systems.

Riding the Wave

Business presenters and gamers have a very different set of requirements and are typically more focused on integrated MIDI/audio playback capabilities. Noise levels, while still important, are less critical than great-sounding wavetable synthesis and flat frequency response.

Further complicating your decision are the profound differences between wavetable implementations. For starters, not all sample sets are created equal. Samples are essentially digital recordings of acoustic musical instruments that the synthesizer processes to generate MIDI output. If those recordings are flawed, the synth will never sound very good. The best-sounding samples can be found on high-end boards, such as Roland's RAP-10 and Turtle Beach's Pinnacle, and are integrated into quality synthesizer chips like Yamaha's OPL-4 and Ensoniq's OTTO.

If a vendor skimps on sample ROM—which stores the basic wavetable instrument sounds—you can wind up with output that sounds nearly as synthetic as old-fashioned FM synthesis. Look for at least a few megabits of onboard samples, and remember that most sample sets are compressed,

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE COHEN

BY DON LABRIOLA

Computer Surround Sound System
Powered Subwoofer
Computer Surround Sound System

UPGRADE KITS make the grade

Upgrade kits—those boxed bundles of CD-ROM drives, sound cards, and speakers once popular for upgrading multimedia-challenged PCs—have changed as multimedia features become omnipresent on new desktops. While there may be fewer kits on the market, the survivors' performance and ease of installation have increased dramatically, while their prices have declined. Even if your PC already has multimedia capabilities—especially out-of-date offerings such as a dual-speed CD-ROM drive or FM-synthesis sound card—you may still be tempted to upgrade once you see what today's kits have to offer.

Creative Labs Multimedia Home 8x

The most obvious difference among the newest upgrade kits is that CD-ROM speeds have shifted into high gear. It was just over a year ago that 2x drives were the industry standard. Today, even 4x drives are on the way out, replaced by 6x, 8x, and even 10x drives.

Also gone is the profusion of proprietary drive interfaces. Nearly all of the drives in kits these days use the Enhanced IDE or ATAPI interface standard on most Pentium motherboards. With Windows 95's Plug and Play architecture, you don't even need to install software drivers for most of these drives. Simply plug them in, and they're automatically recognized.

When you look at CD-ROM drives, however, don't get caught up in the numbers game. Designations such as 6x and 8x refer only to how fast the drives spin the discs, not how fast they transfer information. Most 8x drives don't really deliver data twice as quickly as 4x readers, and you typically won't see much difference in performance between the two (primarily due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of CD-ROM software on the market is written so as not to exclude 4x- or even 2x-drive owners). Overall, the benefits of using a faster CD-ROM drive are largely confined to faster software installations and data searches and sometimes smoother video playback.

Many new upgrade kits also package 16-bit wavetable sound cards, which are capable of recording and reproducing sounds comparable in quality to an audio CD. A growing percentage additionally provide full-duplex capabilities, allowing them to record and play back audio simultaneously. This feature is especially handy for voice conversations over the Internet with programs such as Quarterdeck's WebTalk or VocalTec's Internet Phone, because it allows you to talk and listen to the other party at the same time, just as you would on the telephone.

A good representative of the current crop of multimedia upgrade kits is Creative Labs' Sound Blaster Multimedia Home 8x, which sells for about $339 and offers an 8x CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster 32 PnP wavetable card, speakers, and 11 high-quality CD-ROM titles, including NetSpeak's WebPhone and 10 popular Microsoft programs (such as Money and Encarta). That's just slightly more than you would have paid for the drive alone not too long ago—and much less than you'd pay for the components separately, even today. ***—Sheldon Leemon***

so sounds stored in 1MB of ROM may actually be much larger.

Real-time effects like reverb and chorus can enhance games and music software with a spacious, dramatic sound. These features usually require a digital signal processor (DSP) chip, which can be well worth the $100 or so that it adds to the price of a card. One particularly advanced implementation is Ensoniq's Soundscape Elite, which lets you redefine its feature set on the fly by downloading DSP effect algorithms from disc.

Roland RAP-10

PHOTOGRAPHY TOP: CHRIS GOULD, BOTTOM: BILL MILNE

Sound Support

An important issue for game players is standard support. Although Microsoft hopes to make Windows

(continued on page 100)

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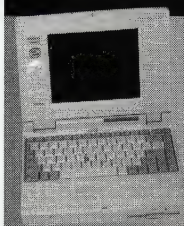

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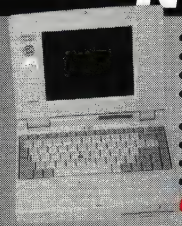

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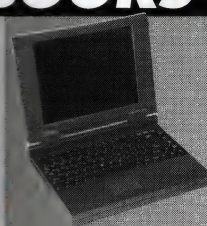

- DX/4100
- 8 mb
- 540 mb HDD
- Fax modem
- 10.4" dual scan
- Touch pad
- PCMCIA III
- Built-in sound

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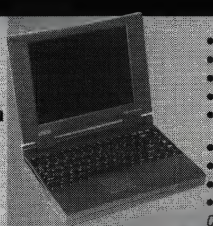

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- 8 mb
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- PCMCIA III
- Built-in sound
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- 9.5" mono
- Trackball

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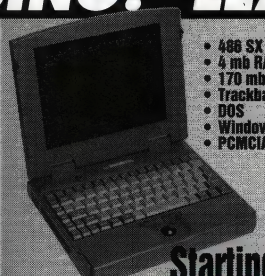

- 486 SX 33
- 4 mb RAM
- 170 mb HDD
- Trackball
- DOS
- Windows
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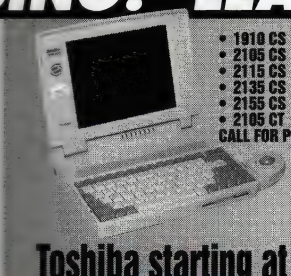

- 1910 CS
- 2105 CS
- 2115 CS
- 2135 CS
- 2155 CS
- 2105 CT

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- 4 mb RAM
- 340 mb HDD
- PCMCIA slot
- DOS
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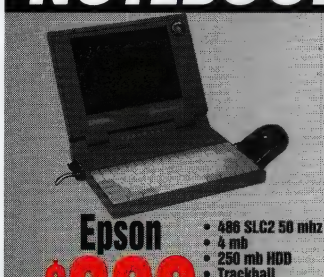

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- 4 mb
- 250 mb HDD
- Trackball
- Dual scan color

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- 4 mb RAM
- 200 mb HDD
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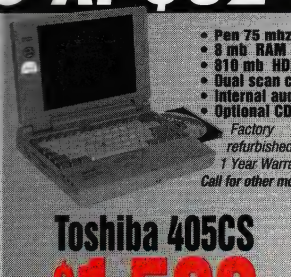
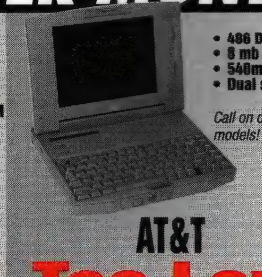


- Pen 75 mhz
- 8 mb RAM
- 810 mb HDD
- Dual scan color
- Internal audio
- Optional CD ROM

Factory refurbished!
1 Year Warranty
Call for other models!

Toshiba 405CS
$1,599



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- Dual scan color

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Windows® 95	365X	100MHz Pentium® Processor	8/810	10.4" Dual Scan	1899	#80836	76 a month
Windows® 95	365X	100MHz Pentium® Processor	8/810MB	10.4" Active Matrix	2299	#81276	92 a month
Windows® 95	365XD	100MHz Pentium® Processor	8/810/4XCD	10.4" Dual Scan	2199	#80835	88 a month
Windows® 95	365XD	120MHz Pentium® Processor	8/1.08GB/4XCD	11.3" Dual Scan	2449	#81233	98 a month
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760ELD-CD	P-100MHz	8/810MB/CD	12.1" Active Matrix	Yes	4369	#81221	175 a month
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Satellite Pro™ 420CDS	100MHz	8/810	11.3" Dual Scan	2,449	#82150	$98 a month
Satellite Pro™ 420CDT	100MHz	8/1.3GB	11.3" Active Matrix	3,399	#82151	$136 a month
Protegé™ 650CT	133MHz	16/1.3GB	11.3" Active Matrix	4,499	#82152	$180 a month

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J30	100MHz	8/800	10.4" Active Matrix	2,479	#80851	$94 a month
J50	133MHz	8/800	10.4" Active Matrix	2,859	#81227	$114 a month

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P30	100MHz Pentium®	8/1.2GB	11.3" Dual Scan/4XCD	2,649	#80857	$106 a month
P30	133MHz Pentium®	8/800GB	11.3" Active Matrix/4XCD	3,599	#80858	$144 a month
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- 1600x1200 @ 66Hz max

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Ultra 40
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- 1024x768 @ 60Hz max

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- 95KHz f max
- 1600x1200 @ 75Hz max

$730**

EO40
- 0.28mm dot pitch
- 48 KHz f max
- 1024x768 @ 60Hz max

$246**

EO50
- 0.28mm dot pitch
- 70KHz f max
- 1280x1024 @ 60Hz max

$341**

EO74T
- 0.25mm Aperture Grill
- 65 KHz f max
- 1280x1024 @ 60Hz max

$630**

EO76T
- 0.25mm Aperture Grill
- 86KHz f max
- 1600x1200 @ 66Hz max

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$575**

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- 70KHz f max
- 1280x1024 @ 60Hz max

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(continued from page 94)

95 the standard platform for PC gaming, plenty of popular titles still run under DOS. Be sure that your sound card supports all the standards you need in each environment–at least Sound Blaster compatibility for FM and General MIDI for wavetable synthesis.

Also look for drivers that support common standards like Microsoft's Windows Sound System digital audio spec and the ADPCM and Mu-Law compression algorithms. Boards that can handle newer standards like MPEG, Progressive Networks' RealAudio, and Microsoft's DirectSound API are also desirable.

As complicated as all this seems, choosing a sound card can be even more complex for musicians. Synth quality, frequency response, noise levels, and real-time effects are all major considerations, and full-duplex audio capabilities and a digital-I/O audio interface can be critical for multitrack recording applications.

Wavetable synthesis is essential for musical applications, but many composers find the 128-instrument General MIDI specification inadequate for serious composition and arrangement. Upward-compatible standards like Roland's General Synthesizer (GS) and Yamaha's XG spec offer hundreds of additional MIDI instruments but are found only on a few boards, such as Roland's SCP-55 and Yamaha's DB50XG daughtercard, which adds XG MIDI capability to many existing sound cards.

Another feature of interest to MIDI musicians is the ability to replace factory-preset synthesizer instruments with home-brewed sounds. Only a few boards support this feature (Creative Labs' Sound Blaster AWE32 PnP and Mediatrix Peripherals' Audiotrix Pro are two), and nearly all do so by providing sockets for onboard sample RAM. Bundled utilities that let you convert WAV files into samples and download them into RAM are still relatively primitive, but with a little patience you can get good results.

Heart Transplants: CPU Upgrades

Don't toss that 486 (or P60 or P66) system on the woodpile just yet! There's still some life left in it. Upgrading your CPU is a quick and relatively inexpensive way (from about $100 to $500, depending on the original processor) to pep up a sluggish PC. All it takes is a motherboard with one of Intel's 237- or 238-pin processor upgrade sockets, or in some cases just a zero-insertion-force (ZIF) socket holding the main CPU.

If you have an upgrade socket, you're looking at one of Intel's Pentium OverDrive chips. If you're starting with a 486/25 desktop (or one with the clock-doubling 486DX2/50 chip), Intel recommends its 63MHz Pentium OverDrive chip. Owners of 486/33 or DX2/66 systems can try the 83MHz version of the Pentium OverDrive. Note that many 25MHz systems can be configured for 33MHz bus speed by changing a jumper on the motherboard, letting you then jump to the faster OverDrive model.

Should your motherboard lack an official OverDrive socket, you still may be in luck if your CPU itself is socketed. Once you've removed your old 486 processor, an IntelDX4 will slide into that socket.

Vendors like Evergreen Technologies also offer plug-in 486-class upgrades based on Cyrix and AMD chips that can accelerate the clock rate to 120MHz and in some cases 133MHz.

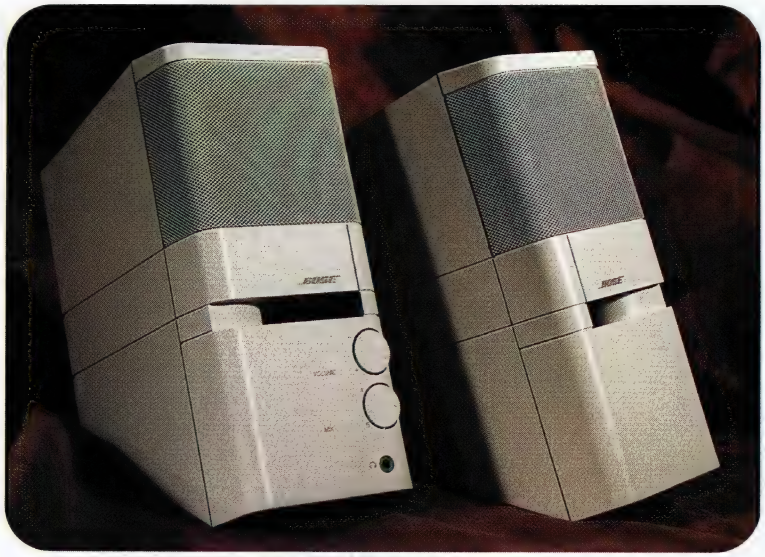
Intel also sells Pentium OverDrive upgrades that boost the clock speed of systems currently equipped with P60, P66, P75, P90, and P100 chips. The company's plans for future OverDrive versions will cover everything up to and including P200 processors. ***—Bill O'Brien***

Speaker Seekers

While the quality of the loudspeakers bundled with many new PCs has improved dramatically over the past year, many otherwise attractive systems still come equipped with tinny, underpowered models guaranteed to put a definite damper on the multimedia experience.

Fortunately, many system vendors offer customers the

(continued on page 104)



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QUADRA 800, 840 AV	29	56	129	
QUADRA 605 610, 650	39	59	129	
CENTRIS 610, 650, 660 AV	29	56	129	
PERFORMA 450 460, 466, 467, 475, 550,575,577,578	29	56	129	
Mac II, IIci, IIcx, IIvi, IIvx, IIx, SE30	49	149	139	

AST	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
PREMIA 4/33,336, 500, 660	45	79 CALL	135	
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PREMIUM 11-SX, SX16, SX20		CALL		
PREMIUM 486 (ALL)		CALL		

COMPAQ	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
PROLINEA MTX 33 4/66, 4/50, 4/66	45	79	139	
PROSIGNIA 486/33 486DX2/66	45	79	139	
PRESARIO 800L 600, 400 SERIES	45	79	139	
PRESARIO CDS 720,724, 920,924	35	59	129	
PROLIANT (ALL)	45	79	139	
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DIMENSION XPS 6/166(NEW)		119	209	469
OPTIPLEX GX PRO200 (NEW)		229	469	
PRECISION 486	45	79	139	
PERFORMANCE	45	79	139	
POWERDESKTOP	45	79	139	
POWERLINE WKST	45	79	139	

IBM	4MB	8MB	16MB
APTIVA, PC 300 SERIES:	55	59	129
PS/VALUEPOINT486 (ALL):	45	79	139
PC 700 SERIES	45	79	139
PREMIER PS/2 56,57,58	45	79	139
57 MULTIMEDIA MCT	45	79	139
PS/1 ADVISOR/ESSENTIAL/WILLOW	45	79	139
*PS/2 50, 60, 70, 95 XP	45	79	139
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HL-720/730	79 (1.5MB)	139	3.5MB ONLY 720)	
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LBP 811/B/T		78		125
LBP-8SX	79	112	149	169
LBP-4/LITE PLUS	85	139		

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CH-6		95		149

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5000, 5200		85	155	
ACTION LASER II	79	115	159(3MB)	219
EPL 6000		95		149
EPL 7000	79	115		219(4.5MB)

EPSON	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
1100(4MB ONLY)/1600	55	89	139	265

HP	2MB	4MB	8MB	16MB
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HP 4	(postscript 269)			
HP 4P, 4MP, HP4V,5M,5N,5P,5SI	39	45	89	139
HP4L, ML (1MEG ONLY)	$39			
HP 5L,5LFS		95	189	
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HP9/10D	78	125		
HP6L,IIP, IIP	78	125		
PAINTJET XL300		109	175	

IBM	1MB	2MB	35MB	4MB
4019		109	159	
4029/4037		89		129
4039/4079				55

KONICA	1MB	2MB	3MB
LP-3110	119	175	219

LEXMARK	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
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WIN WRITER 200,600				

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MT 905		95		149

NEC	2MB
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95/97/97FX	79

OKI	1MB	2MB	4MB
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OKI 600E/610E (NEW)	79	109	135(5MG) 298(17MG)
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OKI 810E (NEW)	CALL		

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KX 4420/4450	99	169	
KX 4400/5400/4401	89	159	
KX 4440/5410	95	159	
KX-P 4450	89 (1MB)		
SP100	89		
KX-6500 (NEW)		55	

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JX9400/9600/9680/9680/ 9700E/9460	49	(2MB 95)		159
JX9500PS	79			249

TANDY	1MB	2MB	3MB	4MB
LP-400/410	59	95		

TI	1MB	2MB	3MB	4MB
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IBM X-STATION 160 SERIES	395			
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INDIGO / POWER INDIGO SERIES	495	735	1425	2785
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4X9-80	39
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2X32-60	(8MB)	59
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256K(160PIN) ASYNC CACHE MODULE FOR IBM APTIVA			65

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782C, 784,786C, 787,760I	69	115	195	
PRO P75,PRO P120 (NEW)		115	195	369
LIGHT 350,356,358,359,361(NEW)		115	195	369

ALTIMA	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
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LSX	79			
NB486	79		239	

AMBRA	4MB	8MB	16MB	20MB
NC 425SL	79	129		
N100	79	129	229	CALL
SN SERIES	79		229	

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520/C, 540/C	85	129	239	409
140, 145B, 170, 180 160, 165, 180C, 165C	169	295	359 (10MB)	

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425L SPECIAL EDITION	75		219	
BRAVO NB/EXPLORER	75		209	
ADVANTAGE EXPLORER 212 (NEW)	85	139		
ASCENTIA J SERIES (KIT)		115	195	369
ASCENTIA P SERIES (NEW)		139	229	
ASCENTIA 900, 910N	75	119	219	
ASCENTIA 950		119	209	
ASCENTIA 800, 810/N	75	119	209	
PEN EXEC	2MB65		4MB 85	

AT&T	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
AT&T SAFARI 3151/3181	85	139	239	
GLOBALYST 130	79	115	195	
GLOBALYST 200S	85	139	249	
GLOBALYST 250P	85	139	249	

AUSTIN NOTEBOOK	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
BUSINESS AUDIO XL DX4		149	289	
DX4/DX2/SX2/SX	79		289	
EDGE XP PENTIUM (NEW)		149	289	CALL
VISTA	85	139	249	329(24MB)

CANON	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
NOTEJET 486C (BN100)	75	119		
NOTEJET 486 (BN22)	75	119		
NOTEJET II (BN32)	75	119		
NOTEJET III		119	209	379
NOTEJET III CX	75	119	209	
INNOVABOOK 1100T	75	119	209	
INNOVABOOK 10C SUB	75		209	
INNOVABOOK 150C, 175C	79		209	
INNOVA 200LS	79	129	219	(20MB CALL)
INNOVA 486NX	75	119		

COMPAQ	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
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ARMADA 4100		149	249	379
CONCERTO 425/433	75	119	209	
CONTURA 4/25,C,CX	75	119	209	
CONTURA 400C,410C,420,430C	75	119	209	
CONTURA AERO 4/33C	75	119	209	
LTE-ELITE 4/25/C, 4/75/C	75	119	209	
LTE-5000,5100,5200, 119 (8MB)	219 (16MB)		379(32MB)	769(64MB)

CTX EZBOOK	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
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DEC PC	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
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433SE, SE COLOR	75		209	
425SL, 433SLC PREMIUM	75		209	
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HI-NOTE ULTRA/ULTRA II	79	115	195	
HI-NOTE ULTRA VP (NEW)		119	209	349

DELL	2MB	4MB	8MB	16MB
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320SLi, 325SLi	65	109	119	
320N+	65	109		
212N, 320N	65			
LATITUDE LX475D,410D/T		75	119	229
LATITUDE 433/C, CX, 425		75		229
LATITUDE XP 410DCX,450C/CX,475CX		75	115	195
LATITUDE M, MX, MC, MCX		75	119	209

EPSON	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
ACTION NOTE 500C	79			
ACTION NOTE 650/660C	75	119	209	
ACTION NOTE 700	89		249	
ACTION NOTE 890CX, 890C	75	115	195	
ACTION NOTE 895C, 910 (NEW)	75	115	195	
ACTION NOTE 4000 4SLC/25,33,4SLC2 /50		129(6MB)		
NB3S (4MG ONLY), NB5L20,25	85	129		

FUJITSU	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
ERGOLITE F/N/S SERIES	75	129		
ERGOLITE 575,590CD,5120CD,X75		119	209	369
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COLORBOOK	85		229	
HANDBOOK	79		209	
LIBERTY	79	119	209	
NOMAD/NOMAD N	159		745	
SOLO 590,5120,V75 (NEW)		119	209	369

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OMNIBOOK 600CT 4/75	89	129		
OMNIBOOK 4000 C/CT	89		239	
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CL57LSX	85	129		
PS/NOTE 2618	69	129	169	
PS/NOTE 1812, N812, L40SX	69	139		
THINKPAD 340	75	119		
THINKPAD 350, 350C	65	105	169	
THINKPAD 355, 355C,360C/CS	75	119	209	
THINKPAD 365C, CS	69	115	195	369
THINKPAD 365 X (NEW)		119	229	745
THINKPAD 510/Cs,(500 BMG MAX)	95	139	229	
THINKPAD 560 (NEW)		119	229	745
THINKPAD 700,C, 720/C	85	129		
THINKPAD 701 BUTTERFLY	69	115	209	
THINKPAD 750/C/Cs/P	85	119	229	409
THINKPAD 755C DX2/4	85	119	209	409
755CS DX2/4	85	119	209	409
THINKPAD 760C (NEW)		115	209	
THINKPAD 760 E,EL,ELD (NEW)		119	229	745

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GS SERIES	85	159		
SE10	85	159		

MICRON TECHNOLOGY	8MB	16MB	32MB
MILLENNIUM TRANSPORT P133	119	229	CALL

MIDWEST MICRO	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
ELITE SOUND BOOK 486	79	119	209	
ELITE SOUNDBOOK II 486	79	119	209	
ELITE SOUNDBOOK PLUS (PENTIUM)	79	119	209	

NEC	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
VERSA E/M/V/P 3.3	75	119	209	389
VERSA S/55D	75	115	195	
VERSA 2000/2200C	75	115	195	369
VERSA 4000 (NEW)		119	209	389
NERSA 6000 (NEW)		149	239	409

PACKARD BELL	2MB	4MB	8MB	16MB
STATESMAN/PLUS	59		149	

SAGER	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
3600		169	289	489
6500	85		289	
7500	85	169	289	489
7600 (NEW)		169	289	
8500 (NEW)	85	149	249	429
9500	85	169	289	

SAMSUNG	4MB	6MB	8MB	16MB
NOTEMASTER 16/25	149	249		
SENS 700/800 (NEW)	109		169	269
SENS 810 (NEW)	169(8MB)	269(16MB)		439(32MB)

SHARP	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
3010,3050	69	105	189	
3020,3060 PENTIUM (NEW)		109	189	349
3030, 3040, 3070		139	249	
7700/7750/8150,8560,8660	79		209	
8700,8800,8900	79	119	209	
9000/9030		119	209	389
9040/9070		119	209	389
ZAURUS PALMTOP	135	229		

T.I.	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
TI 4000E	129		739	
TI 4000M	129		739	
TI 3000 (2MG)	65			
TI 2000 (1MG)	65			
TI 5000,5100,5200,5300		119	209	
TI 6000 (NEW)		129	229	
TI EXTENSA 455 SERIES (NEW)	75	115	195	
TI EXTENSA 510/515 (NEW)		105	195	369
TI EXTENSA 550/560 SERIES (NEW)		115	195	369

TOSHIBA	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
TOSHIBA 100CS/400/610 SERIES		119	209	359
TECRA 770CS, 770CT (NEW)		149	239	409
T1900,1900CT,1950,1960 T4400/4500/4700	75	129	209	
4800/4900 (NEW)	75	129	209	389
T6400/6600	89	169	249	419
T1850/C, 1800 2200SX	89	169		
T2000SXE	89	169		
T2100, T2150CDS/CDT	69	119	189	349(24MB)
PROTEGE 3400	69	115	189	
T2400/3400	69	115	189	

TWINHEAD	4MB	8MB	16MB	32MB
SLIMNOTE 6/8 PENTIUM (NEW)		139	229	
SLIMNOTE E 486DX	85		229	
SLIMNOTE 1/5 SERIES	85		229	

WINBOOK				
WINBOOK XP (NEW)		189	269	429
WINBOOK XP 5 (NEW)				469

ZENITH				
Z-STAR 433VL (2MB)	59	149		
Z-STAR EX	69		189	
Z-NOTE FLEX/ES/EX/GT/MX	69	115	189	

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HP 95/100/200 LX		175	295	365(12MB)
HP OMNIGO 100	119	155	285	535
KODAK DC40/DC50		175	295	365(12MB)
NIKON E2		175	295	365(12MG)
SHARP ZAURUS	119	155	285	335(10MB)
SONY MAGILINK	39(64K)	55(128K)	65(256K)	95(512K)

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128K	55	4MB	155
256K	65	8MB	285
512K	95	10MB	335
1MB	129	16MB	525
2MB	209		
4MB	629		

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MATH CO-PROCESSOR

CYRIX DX-40	65
CYRIX SX-33	65

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Changers for the Better

If disc-swapping is becoming a frequent form of interaction between you and your computer, you may want to consider adding a CD-ROM changer. In addition to comfortably accommodating multidisc multimedia titles like Virgin Interactive's The 11th Hour or business tools like Pro CD's Select Phone digital telephone directory, a changer can provide instant access to several CD-ROM resources—such as an encyclopedia, desk reference, and dictionary—without pausing to reload.

Generally speaking, changers come in two flavors: tray- or cartridge-loading. While the majority of the current generation clocks in at 4x speed, you'll find a fair amount of diversity in terms of internal vs. external drives, SCSI vs. IDE, and disc-holding capacities (typically ranging from three to seven discs, although some units can go even higher). Mail-order prices for three-disc, IDE internal drives, such as Turtle Beach's TBS-3000, start at about $261.

Panasonic Big 5

About the only downside to using a changer is the fairly high potential for conflicts with drivers, temperamental discs, or the operating system itself. In fact, Windows 95 can prove particularly daunting when installing a CD-ROM changer. Although most changers let you assign each tray a separate drive letter, Windows 95 does not natively support this naming convention for IDE changers; it assigns the device a single drive letter. In order to switch between drives, you will either need additional Win 95 drivers provided by the manufacturer, or a hardware-drive selection mechanism. Meanwhile, some discs, like Microsoft Bookshelf 95, for example, can be accessed only by the drive letter from which they were installed. To ease such problems, some changers, like Panasonic's internal, five-disc Big 5 (model SQ-TC500N, about $299), come with replacement drivers that let you choose between multiple- or single-drive letters.

The replacement drivers can be tricky business as well, and can even result in less-than-ideal performance (the Big 5, for instance, averaged closer to 2x speed on our lab tests until we switched off the Windows 95 read-ahead cache). One way to avoid at least some of these hassles is to opt for an external SCSI unit, which, although typically more expensive than an IDE changer, doesn't require any additional drivers to work with multiple drive letters under Win 95. A popular choice in this category is Pioneer's DRM-624X, a cartridge-loading, six-disc changer that sells for an estimated $329. In fact, this well-designed but bulky (i.e., measuring over 14 inches deep) changer offers a 4.4x spin rate, making it a virtual speed demon among changers. ***—Steven Schwartz***

(continued from page 100)

option of upgrading to a better grade of speakers at the time of purchase. If you're on a tight budget, however, you can always make the switch on your own at a later date, although you may pay a bit more.

As a rule, desktop multimedia speakers need to satisfy so many compromises that they rarely provide the flat extended-frequency response, low THD levels, and earsplitting dynamics we have come to expect from home-stereo models. Many PC speakers do offer a decent high end, but the best way to obtain good bass reproduction for games and audio CDs is to opt for a three-piece satellite/subwoofer system, which includes a separate bass module.

Although high-performance satellite/subwoofer systems sell for as much as $800, some affordably priced three-piece systems provide fairly pleasing results. Altec Lansing's $99-list ACS45, for example, consists of an under-the-desk subwoofer and two small cube satellites, one of which features a pushbutton volume control. Another good choice is Labtec's LCS-2612, a $119-estimated system with Spatializer 3-D sound enhancement and a handy mounting bracket that attaches the satellites to your monitor.

A few models—such as Yamaha's $249.95-list System 45 and Cambridge Soundworks' $349-direct MicroWorks—even strive to provide overall sound quality on a par with that of better-quality home components. At the same time, some two-piece speaker systems are capable of providing surprisingly rich bass tones—Bose Corp.'s $339-list MediaMates system is an excellent choice. But overall, satellite/subwoofer systems offer the best value.

If you choose a satellite product, make sure the bass unit has a dedicated power amplifier, since low-frequency modules generally require 50 to 100 percent more power than desktop satellites. You should also look for systems with a separate volume control on the bass module, which, unlike conventional bass/treble tone controls, lets you adjust the relative volumes of the bass and satellite units independently.

(continued on page 108)

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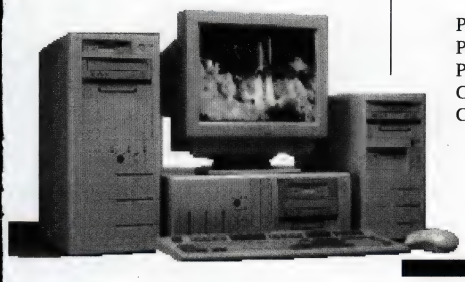

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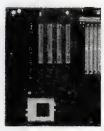

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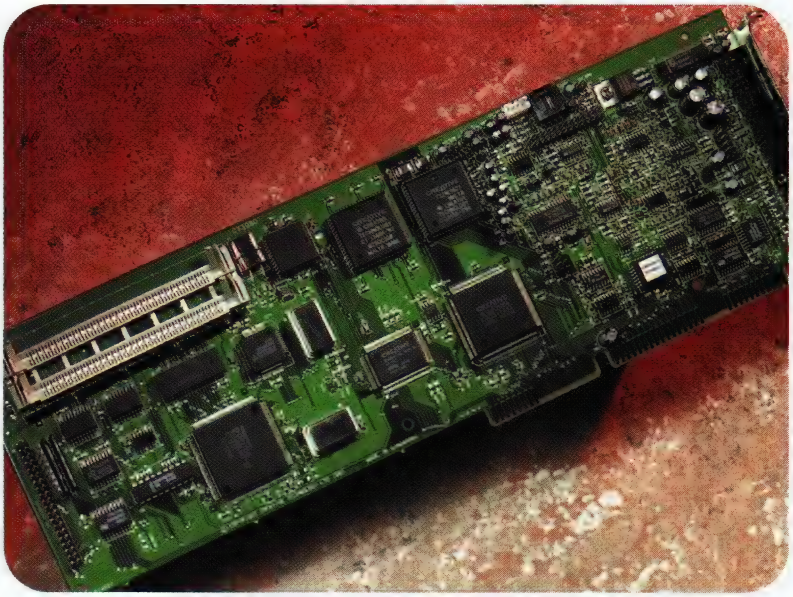
(continued from page 104)

When evaluating the power ratings of a speaker's integrated amplifier, be sure the figures you're comparing are quoted in units of single-channel RMS watts. Some manufacturers try to make their products look more powerful by combining the wattage of each channel or by using other wattage scales that measure the volume of transient peaks. Remember, too, that although amplifier power is a good ball-park selection criterion, it isn't necessarily a precise indicator of sound quality or even maximum volume levels.



Creative Labs Sound Blaster AWE32 PnP

Hearing in 3-D

Close listening positions, such as those typically found in PC setups, also create a compressed sound field that reduces the impact of music and game soundtracks. An increasing number of new speakers attempt to solve this problem by incorporating one of several 3-D sound-enhancement technologies from companies such as Binaura, QSound, Spatializer, and SRS Labs. These techniques use sophisticated algorithms to create the illusion of a much wider soundstage that extends beyond the physical limits of the speakers.

Dolby Labs takes this approach one step further with its Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound technology and the upcoming AC-3 format (to be implemented in new DVD software), which produces a true 360-degree sound field using rear-facing or rear-firing speakers. Altec Lansing's $450-list ACS500 and SSI Products' $299-list Cineplex 1500 are the first multimedia speaker systems with integrated Pro Logic capabilities, but not many compatible titles are on the market yet.

You'll also find 3-D sound capabilities built into some mass-market audio cards such as Creative Labs' Sound Blaster AWE32 PnP, which uses a proprietary 3-D enhancement technology, and Crystal Lake Multimedia's SRS-enhanced 3D Sound Series 140 cards. Another option is an outboard 3-D module that plugs between your sound card and speakers. These include NuReality's Vivid 3D Pro, which offers adjustable SRS processing, and Labtec's Imager LCS-9210, a standalone Spatializer processor.

Shopping Tips

Any modern sound card should support 16-bit stereo sampling at 44.1KHz (CD-quality audio). For games and music playback, wavetable audio—which uses digitized samples of actual instruments—is far superior to FM-synthesis audio, which sounds like '70s "computer" or "synthesizer" music.

Serious MIDI music composers may want a sound card that supports Roland's GS or Yamaha's XG extensions, which add hundreds of additional instruments to the General MIDI specification, or one with sockets for sample RAM that lets you save and use your own sound effects as instruments.

Computer speakers should be magnetically shielded to prevent distorting the images on a nearby monitor. Many two-piece speaker sets provide good sound at low cost, but the best bass for games and audio CDs comes from a three-piece system with a pair of desktop speakers and a free-standing subwoofer.

Several sound cards and speakers offer 3-D audio, which tweaks sound tracks to compensate for typically tight speaker placement and creates the illusion of surround sound. Alternatively, you can buy an add-on 3-D module that plugs between your sound card and speakers.

If you want to record voice memos, use your spouse's or child's greeting as a startup sound, or experiment with computer and Internet telephony, your PC will need a decent microphone. The cheap mikes bundled with many sound cards will do for starters, but $10 to $40 will get you a better unit, either a desktop model with a bendable neck or a headset-mounted unit. Look for a unidirectional mike that filters out ambient sound from noisy environments such as offices.

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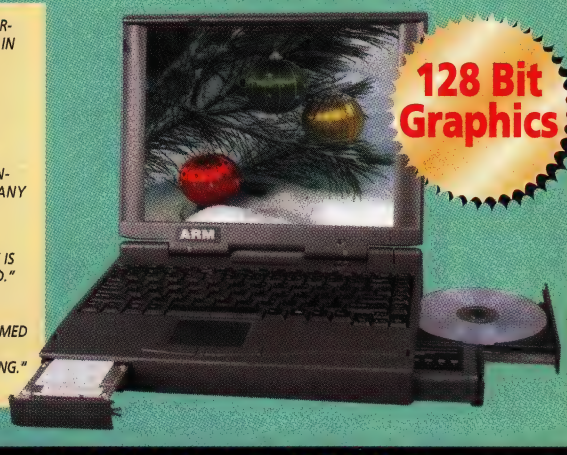

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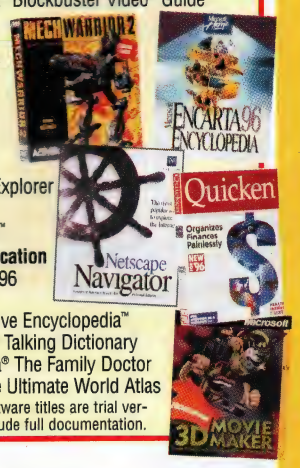

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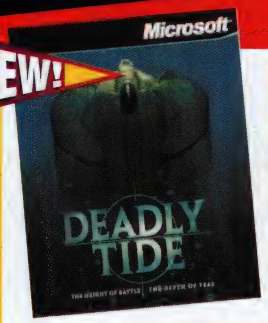

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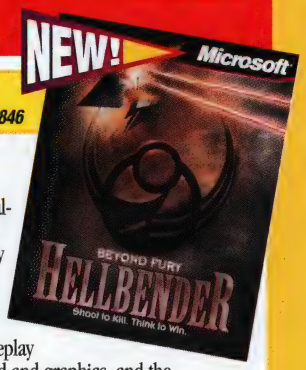

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CD-R: create your own CDs

CD-Recordable prices are falling while ease of use is on the rise.

For multimedia creators, business training and documentation authors, and those who produce hard drive backup, today's CD recorders are a dream come true. Just a few years ago, you would have paid $10,000 for a specialized workstation capable of burning video, data, and audio CDs, and the few PC-based systems had to be configured with exotic peripherals and expensive, complicated premastering software.

All that is quickly becoming a dim memory, thanks to the arrival of low-priced CD-Recordable (CD-R) hardware and easy-to-use software. Drives capable of 2x recording and 4x playback—the latter making them suitable for use as your everyday CD-ROM drive—have plummeted to under $700. Inexpensive utilities like Adaptec's (formerly Corel's) CD Creator 2 let you create sophisticated Video CD, CD Extra, and CD-i discs on almost any Windows 95-compatible PC. At the same time, blank 650MB

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

By Don Labriola

Philips CDD2000, Pinnacle Micro RCD5040

discs, which cost nearly $100 each in the early '90s, should be selling for as little as $6 in small quantities by year's end.

So far, most people are using these new drives as an inexpensive way to back up their hard disks. This application requires a drive with multisession recording capabilities, which lets you record a disc in several sittings and read back its entire contents after each session, just as you would when writing incremental backups to tape. (Don't confuse multisession with track-at-once recording, which also lets you add one track at a time, but doesn't provide access to stored data until the last track is written and you write-protect the disc.)

Check the Specs

Some recent CD-R bundles offer even more than you might expect. Smart & Friendly's new CDR 2004/Pro MM, for instance, comes with a 2x record/4x read drive, Adaptec SCSI controller and EZ CD-Pro software, and Macromedia's Director 5 multimedia-authoring software, all for a direct price of $799.

If you're interested in authoring your own CDs, you'll encounter various multimedia disc formats described either by their colloquial names—such as audio CD, CD-ROM, or Video CD—or by the name of the technical "colored book" specifications on which they're based. (See the sidebar "A Rainbow of Standards.")

In either case, don't take it for granted that the recorder and its bundled applications provide identical levels of functionality. Because most CD-R units ship with third-party packages, it's not uncommon for a drive and its software to support different sets of standards. Before you buy, check both hardware and software spec sheets, even if the bundle has been assembled by a single vendor.

Any CD-R drive that supports the Yellow Book Mode 1 specification will let you create standard CD-ROMs. But authors who develop titles for commercial release will also want the ability to generate master discs that can be used for mass replication. This requires a drive that can produce the slightly modified Yellow Book format preferred by replication plants.

Most CD-Rs can record audio CDs, but they usually require digital source material such as WAV files or tracks from an existing audio disc. This often involves storing dig-

(continued on page 122)

A CD-R Software Checklist

Premastering packages such as Adaptec's CD Creator 2 can do more to define a CD-R drive's personality than any hardware features. Here are some of the most important functions to look for when evaluating CD-R software:

Drag-and-drop layout editing: Lets you organize the contents of a CD with the mouse as though you were using Windows Explorer to arrange files on your hard drive.

Optimization: Structures the physical layout of files on a CD to provide the best playback performance.

Disc wizards: Display sequences of dialog boxes that walk you through the process of laying out and recording a CD.

On-the-fly recording: Lets you record a disc without first creating large intermediate disc-image files on your hard drive.

Simulation: Anticipates throughput bottlenecks and hardware problems that can ruin a blank disc by staging a simulated recording session that doesn't actually write any data.

Runtime simulation: Helps you debug an interactive CD before you record it by creating an executable copy of the disc on your hard drive.

Artwork editor: A specialized minidrawing program that automatically generates artwork for CD jewel cases.

ISO 9660 filename checking: Verifies that all the files you'll be recording conform to the cross-platform ISO 9660 file-naming convention, which guarantees they'll work with Windows, DOS, Mac, and Unix file systems.

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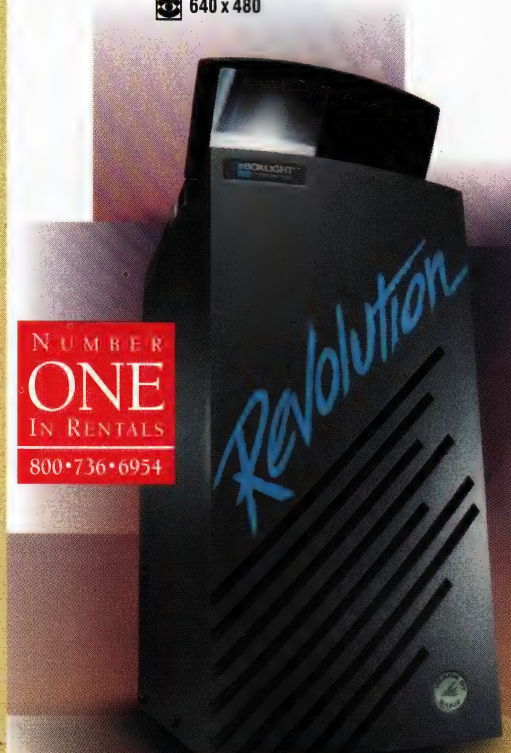

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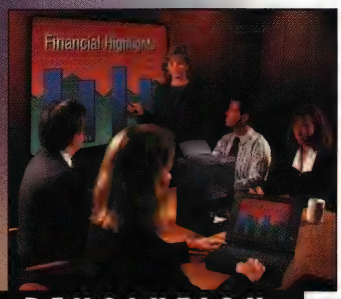

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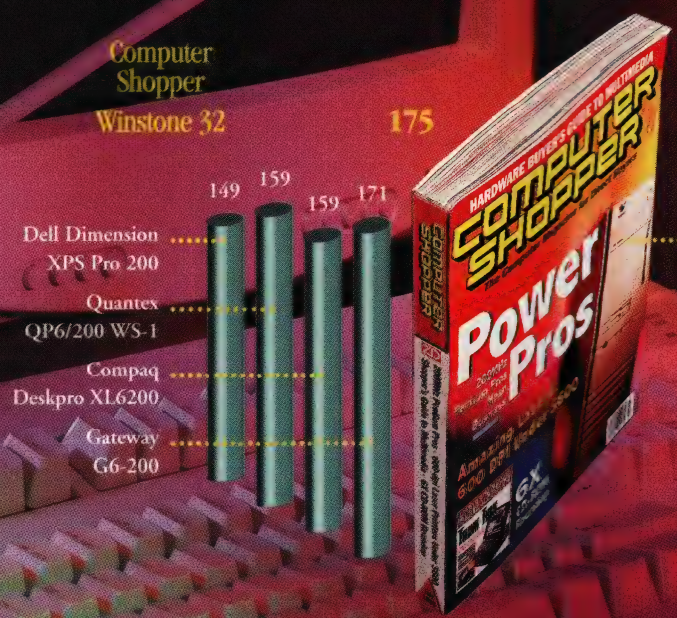

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(continued from page 118)

ital audio in large temporary files on your hard drive, a procedure that can consume huge amounts of disk space. Some recorders, such as Philips' CDD2000, simplify the process by offering on-the-fly recording, which provides real-time disc-to-disc transfer from a CD-ROM player to the CD-R. If you buy a recorder with this feature, your CD-ROM drive must be able to output digital audio data through its I/O bus. Only a few CD-ROM drives, such as Plextor's, offer this capability; all are SCSI devices.

A Rainbow of CD Standards

IF YOU WANT TO RECORD...	LOOK FOR A CD-R THAT SUPPORTS...
Audio CDs	Red Book
CD Extra discs	Blue Book; multisession recording
CD-i titles	Green Book
CD-ROMs	Yellow Book Mode 1
PhotoCDs*	Orange Book Part 2; CD-ROM XA; multisession recording
Video CDs, Karaoke CDs, RealMagic titles	White Book

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Switching Modes

Discs that contain MPEG video—such as Video CDs, Karaoke CDs, and CD-i discs—present additional challenges. They use a special format that crams extra data onto the disc by omitting error-correction bits from each sector. Creating such discs requires a recorder and software package that both support the White Book—or, in the case of CD-i, Green Book—disc format.

Creating such discs may also require you to translate Video for Windows or QuickTime clips into MPEG format. Professional MPEG-encoding stations can run thousands of dollars, but companies like Mediamatics and Xing Technology now offer inexpensive software-only encoders that, although slow, produce acceptable results from midrange PCs. These programs are now being bundled with an increasing number of CD-R drives and premastering packages. Another choice might be a PCI-based MPEG encoding card, such as Data Translation's Broadway, which carries a list price under $1,000.

Most CD-Rs can record mixed-mode discs, which add a track of CD-ROM data to an audio CD. Older mixed-mode formats placed the data track first, where an audio CD player could mistake it for an audio track (an error that sometimes produced ear-shattering results).

The new CD Extra format (previously known as CD Plus or Enhanced CD) tries to solve this problem by putting the data track at the end of the disc, where it can be safely ignored by audio players. Unlike earlier mixed-mode formats, CD Extra has a shot at becoming a mainstream solution for musicians who want to add videos, lyric sheets, graphics, or interactive games to a commercial album release.

Getting Small

Because interruptions in the data stream during recording can ruin a blank disc, older CD-R systems required you to create a complete 650MB disc-image file on your hard drive before actually cutting a blank. By performing CPU-intensive formatting tasks beforehand, this approach reduced the recording operation to a simple file transfer.

Such systems typically required a heavily buffered AV-class hard drive, which unlike conventional drives could produce sustained high throughput without having to interrupt the data transfer to recalibrate the read/write heads. As further insurance, many hardware manufacturers recommended that the recorder be attached to its own dedicated SCSI adapter.

These constraints are far less common today, thanks to more efficient computers, recorders, SCSI interfaces, and premastering software. Many CD-R drives now boast multimegabyte buffers that let them perform on-the-fly recording from multiple sources, often eliminating the need for AV drives, dedicated SCSI adapters, and disc-image files.

The best premastering packages also offer caching options that provide additional buffering by preformatting blocks of data before they're recorded. Before buying any CD-R drive, question the vendor about how reliably it will work on your particular computer.

One final consideration is physical size. Although a few models are still as large as a home stereo system, newer products like Sony's Spressa CD-R drive are no bigger than a conventional CD-ROM reader. If you have an available 5.25-inch bay, you can save a few dollars by buying an internal CD-R model.

The best premastering packages offer caching options for additional buffering.

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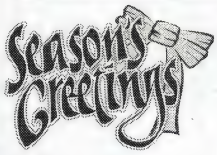

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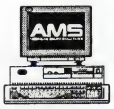

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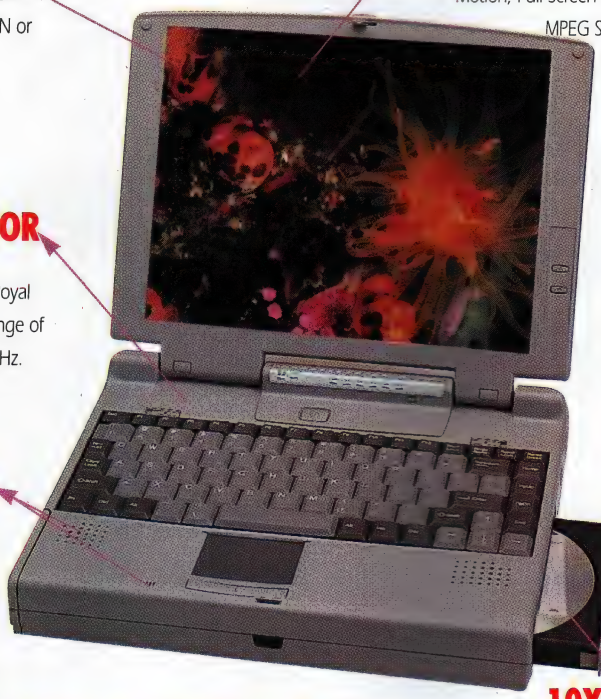

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Choosing the right monitor can be an eye-opening experience.

Whichever applications you run, your computer's monitor will be the main interface between you and your data. That's why picking a monitor is not a decision to be made in haste.

Despite their similarity in appearance, all computer monitors are not alike. Differences in tube types and sizes, control sets, and levels of compliance with industry standards will all impact a display's performance and your viewing comfort. The higher screen resolutions supported by 17-inch and larger tubes, in particular, can have a dramatic effect on your productivity and enjoyment. Of course, bigger doesn't necessarily mean better, but most users agree: It's definitely a step in the right direction.

Tale of the Tube

The image on a monitor's screen starts as a beam of electrons fired from an electron gun located in the back of the tube. From there, one of two types of monitor designs is used to convert those electrons into graphics and text.

The first, and most common, is called the shadow-mask tube. In shadow-mask monitors, the electrons pass through a metal mask dotted with numerous small holes. Emerging from the mask, the charged electrons heat up tiny red, green, and blue phosphor particles called pixels.

Most good shadow masks are made of an alloy called Invar that resists expansion and contraction caused by the heat generated inside the monitor, which can distort images. Some inexpensive monitors, however, lack Invar masks.

Aperture-grille tubes, by contrast, create images using grilles with vertical slots that emit stripes of color. The most popular aperture-grille tubes today are Sony's Trinitron and Mitsubishi's DiamondTron.

Until recently, the prevailing opinion was that shadow-mask tubes created sharper images, while the more costly aperture-grille tubes displayed lusher colors. But these days, the differences are narrowing. The 17-inch MAG InnoVision DX17T, for example, uses a Trinitron tube, yet creates an enticingly crisp image and lists for a middle-of-the-road price of $899. At the same time, Samsung's SyncMaster 17GLsi shadow-mask monitor offers both good color quality and sharp images for its $999 list price.

Easy on the Eyes

Because phosphors hold their glow for only a few milliseconds, the image on a monitor needs to be repeatedly redrawn (even though you may not be aware of it). The rate at which this occurs is called the vertical scan, or refresh rate.

A refresh rate below 75Hz will produce a noticeable flicker that can cause eyestrain and headaches. Some users may need a monitor that goes even higher, such as Panasonic's 17-inch PanaSync/Pro P17, which supports refresh rates as high as 106Hz.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

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Another important factor to consider when shopping for a shadow-mask monitor is tight dot pitch, referring to the distance from the center of one pixel to the center of the next pixel of the same color. The smaller the dot pitch, the sharper the image. The largest acceptable dot pitch is 0.28mm for 15- and 17-inch monitors and 0.31mm for larger monitors, although some displays offer exceptionally tight dot pitches. ViewSonic's Optiquest V775, for instance, has a dot pitch of 0.26mm.

MAG Innovision DX17T

The equivalent of this measurement in aperture-grille monitors is called grille, stripe, or aperture pitch. Although grille pitch doesn't correlate precisely with dot pitch, monitors with the same grille-pitch and dot-pitch measurements produce roughly the same level of sharpness.

In order to avoid eyestrain, it's important that your image be as focused as possible. To test a monitor's focus, move an icon on your Windows desktop to the center of the screen and examine it closely. Then place the icon in the corners and along the edges of the screen. A slight loss in sharpness is common and acceptable, but be wary of focus that looks too soft.

Bigger doesn't necessarily mean better, but most users agree: It's definitely a step in the right direction.

The Right Size and Resolution

Monitor size is the diagonal measurement of the tube. However, this measurement customarily takes into account the entire tube rather than just the viewable area, including edges hidden by the monitor's case or bezel. A 15-inch monitor should offer at least 13.6 viewable inches. For a 17-inch tube, expect at least 15.5 inches.

A monitor's size has a direct impact on the image resolution, which is measured by the number of pixels on one horizontal line multiplied by the number of lines. VGA resolution, for instance, consists of 640 pixels on each of 480 lines. For most business applications, a good 15-inch monitor may be adequate, although a 17-inch display offers distinct advantages to both office and home users. The greatest benefit is that the larger screen size can comfortably accommodate a 1,024x768 image, which lets you fit more information onscreen. On a 15-inch monitor, you probably won't want to exceed 800x600 resolution, due to the subsequent reduction in the size of onscreen icons and text.

In the corporate environment, the move from a 15- to 17-inch monitor generally translates to greater productivity; in the home, users will certainly appreciate the increase in screen real estate for games and other image-intensive applications.

Although more PCs are shipping with 17-inch monitors, the majority still come with 15-inch models. Most vendors, however, will give you the option of upgrading to a larger display for an additional $200 to $300, a worthy investment if you plan to use your computer for more than a few hours each week. Remember that refresh rates can vary depending on the monitor's resolution. Look for a 15-inch monitor that can display 800x600 resolution at a refresh rate of 75Hz or higher; a 17-inch monitor should provide a flicker-free image at 1,024x768 resolution.

If you work with precise graphic applications such as computer-aided design (CAD) or the graphic arts, you may want to consider using 1,280x1,024 or higher resolution on a 20- or 21-inch monitor. However, the price jump here remains prohibitive for many users.

Listen to the Music

While most monitors still provide silent pictures, a fair number of so-called multimedia models offer built-in speakers. These monitors can be most useful in situations where tight desktop space, or fear of office theft, precludes the use of a free-standing speaker system. Generally speaking, multimedia monitors cost about $100 more than comparable models without sound.

(continued on page 132)

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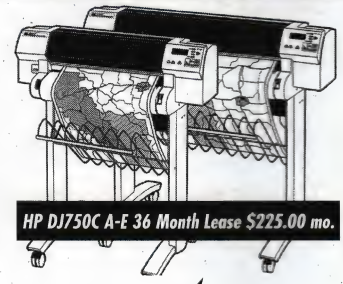

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2430CD	PENTIUM® 133	16/1G	11.3 DUAL SCAN	$CALL
4200	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	10.4" SVGA TFT	$2549
4230	PENTIUM® 133	8/1G	10.4 SVGA TFT	$3499
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6030HCD	PENTIUM® 133	16/1.2G	12.1" ACTIVE	$4399
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4110	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	11.3 DUAL SCAN	$2229
4110D	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	11.3 DUAL SCAN	$2499
4120	PENTIUM® 120	16/1.0G	11.3 DUAL SCAN	$2799
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5100	PENTIUM®90	8/1.2G	10.4" ACTIVE	$2399
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100CS	PENTIUM® 75	8/500	10.4" DUAL SCAN	$1279
110CT	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	11.3" ACTIVE	$1999
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420CDT	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	11.3" ACTIVE	$2099
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PC 9020..... $2599
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365X	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	10.4" ACTIVE	$1999
365XD	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	10.4" DUAL SCAN	$1999
365XD	PENTIUM® 120	8/1.0G	10.4" DUAL SCAN	$2199
365XD	PENTIUM® 120	8/1.0G	10.4" ACTIVE	$2489
560	PENTIUM® 100	8/810	11.3" DUAL SCAN	$2399
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J50CTS10	PENTIUM® 133	8/800	11.3" TFT SVGA	$3299
P50CTS11	PENTIUM® 133	8/800	11.3" ACTIVE	$3499
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SENS 810	PENTIUM® 100	8/1.3G	12.1" ACTIVE	$2999
SENS 810	PENTIUM® 120	16/1.3G	12.1" ACTIVE	$3499
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True 600dpi output • Up to 6ppm • Straight path paper feed • 35 scalable fonts • surf-n-print internet printing management

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ML321 TURBO	$429
ML395	$989
ML590	$429
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Canon $359

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720x720 dpi, Black Printing on Plain Paper, 1.3 pages per minute max. color printr speed, 100 sheet letter/legal paper tray, includes Canon Creative CD-ROM, 2-year Canon warranty

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BJC-70	$279
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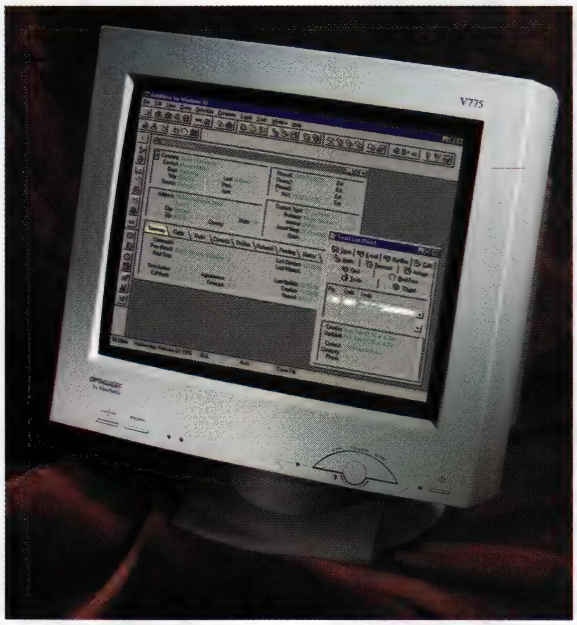
(continued from page 128)

You may want to note, however, that the audio quality in these monitors rarely matches that of a good pair of standalone speakers. In particular, most multimedia monitors lack deep bass response. The Nokia 447Xav, which builds a subwoofer into the monitor's base to create vibrant bass sound, is a rare exception. You'll pay for this extra punch in performance, however; though its video is as excellent as its audio, the 447Xav will set you back about $950.



ViewSonic Optiquest V775

In Control

Before making your final purchase decision, be sure that the monitor has adequate controls for fine-tuning the image. Besides standard controls for brightness, contrast, screen size, and centering, better models also provide controls for geometric distortions such as pincushioning, in which the sides of the image bow outward. Graphic artists should also use a monitor that has color-temperature controls to help match onscreen colors with output devices.

Don't sweat it if the monitor doesn't have fancy onscreen menus to walk you through the adjustment process, but if your budget can possibly allow it, look for digital controls over analog controls; the former can "learn" centering, image size, and other settings so you needn't readjust the image every time you switch graphics modes or resolutions. Similarly, some monitors, like Samsung's SyncMaster 17GLsi, can connect to your PC via a serial port, letting you use Windows software to make adjustments in the display. Again, this is a nice feature, but hardly essential.

However, if you already use or will soon migrate to Windows 95, make sure your monitor is Plug and Play-compatible. Coupled with a plug-and-play graphics card, such a monitor can be set up for optimal performance (usually meaning the highest available refresh rate) in a snap.

Finally, some people are concerned over the health effects of monitors' electromagnetic emissions. Make sure your new display follows one of two Swedish standards, MPR-II or the stricter TCO spec, which limit such emissions.

Shopping Tips

When it comes to monitor size, the bigger the better—up to 17 inches, anyway. While it may sound snazzy to slaughter enemy aliens on a deluxe 21-inch display, the extra screen size means a big jump in cost and often ungainly bulk and weight. You should consider mega-monitors only for sophisticated graphics and CAD applications.

A 15-inch monitor will let you work comfortably at 800x600 or occasionally 1,024x768 resolution; a 17-inch screen boosts those values to 1,024x768 and 1,280x1,024, respectively. Make absolutely sure your monitor and graphics card can combine to yield a noninterlaced, flicker-free refresh rate of 75Hz or higher.

While multimedia monitors are great for offices with little desk space, their built-in speakers rarely match the sound quality of separate speakers for entertainment or multimedia applications.

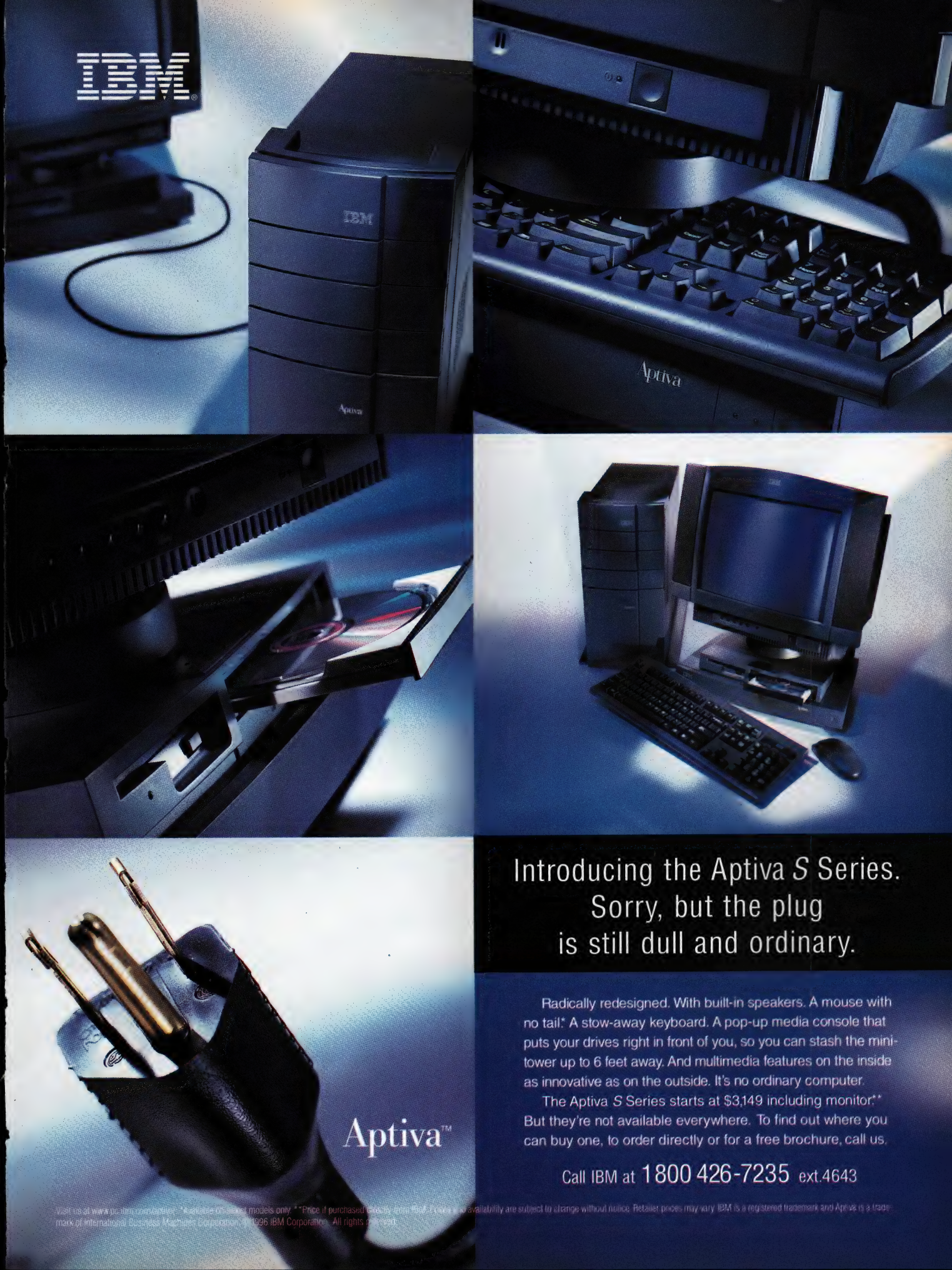
Look for digital controls that won't need resetting each time you switch resolutions or graphics modes. Minimal controls include brightness, contrast, image size, and centering; fancier ones battle distortion effects such as pincushioning or misconvergence.

A monitor that meets the Display Power Management Signaling (DPMS) standard can dim itself when idle to save energy. One that meets the Display Data Channel (DDC) spec can "talk" to a Plug and Play-compatible graphics card to set the highest possible refresh rate under Windows 95.

If you're concerned about possible ill effects to your health from monitors' electromagnetic emissions, look for compliance with the Swedish MPR-II or stricter TCO emission limits. Note, too, that the worst emissions come from the back, not the front, of a monitor.

To avoid eyestrain, make sure you periodically look away from your monitor and focus on a distant object. It also helps to place the monitor at or slightly above eye level.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE GREENBERG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Acer America	56e	$389	15/13.6	0.28	1,024x768	ZO, TZ, BA, DG, SV, CT, +	14.4x14.8x15.2
Acer America	78ie	$749	17/15.6	0.26	1,280x1,024	ZO, TZ, BA, PN, DG, +	16.5x16.6x16.7
ADI Systems	MicroScan 4V	$529	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, SV, +	14.5x14.3x15.3
ADI Systems	MicroScan 5V	$899	17/16	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, DG, SV, +	15.8x16.4x17.1
ADI Systems	MicroScan 17X	$1,099	17/16	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, DG, SV, CT, +	18.8x17.8x17.9
ADI Systems	MicroScan 17	$1,299	17/16	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, DG, SV, CT, +	15.7x16.1x17.5
AOC International	Spectrum 5Glr	$499	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	DG, PN, SV, CT, TZ, +	*
AOC International	Spectrum 7Clr	$799	17/15.8	0.28	1,024x768	DG, PN, CT, TZ, RO, +	16.1x15.8x16.8
AOC International	Spectrum 7DlrA	$804	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, DG,	*
Apple Computer	Multiple Scan 15	$479	15/*	0.28	832x624	ZO	16.7x15.9x17.8
Apple Computer	Multiple Scan 1705	$819	17/15.8	0.28	1,024x768	CL, DG, SV	17.2x16.5x18.8
Apple Computer	AppleVision 1710	$1,039	17/16.1	0.26	1,280x1,024	ZO, CL, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT	19.7x17.6x15.8
ArtMedia USA	TX1864	$888	17/16	0.25	1,024x768	PN, DG, SV, CT, OS	16x17x17.7
Ashtek	Digiking 15	$299	15/13.8	0.28	1,280x1,024	FO,TZ, CL, PN, CV, DG	14.5x16.8x17.5
Ashtek	Digiking 17	$599	17/15.5	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, PN, CV, DG	14.5x16.8x17.5
AST Computer	ASTVision 5L	$349	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, OS, DG, SV, CT, +	14.7x15.5x15.7
AST Computer	ASTVision 7L	$689	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, OS, DG, SV, CT, +	17.1x17.2x17
AST Computer	ASTVision 7H	$899	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, BA, OS, DG, SV, CT, +	16.6x17.1x17
Compaq Computer	150	$389	15/13.8	0.28	800x600	None	15.5x14.5x15.4
Compaq Computer	151FS	$445	15/14.1	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, RO	14.4x14.6x15.4
Compaq Computer	V70	$720	17/15.6	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, DG, SV, RO	17.3x16.6x17.3
Compaq Computer	QVision 172	$845	17/15.6	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, PN, CV, DG, RO	16.7x16.8x18.1
Computek Components	VS1528D	$399	15/14.8	0.28	800x600	PN, OS, DG, SV	*
Computek Components	VS1742	$399	17/16.8	0.42	640x480	BA, OS, CV, DG, SV	16.6x16.8x16.9
Computek Components	VS1728	$799	17/16.8	0.28	800x600	PN, OS, DG, SV	16.2x16.6x16.6
Cornerstone Imaging	17/76	$895	17/16	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, ZO, TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.9x16.1x18.3
CTX International	VL500	$425	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, DG, SV, CT, +	15.1x14.5x16
CTX International	VL700	$755	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, DG, SV, CT, +	17.3x16.5x16.4
CTX International	PR700	$999	17/16	0.25	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, CV, SV, CT, +	17.2x16.5x17.5
Daewoo Electronics	CMC-1505X	$429	15/14	0.28	800x600	CL, DG, PN, SV, OS, TR	14.9x15.3x16
Daewoo Electronics	CMC-1509B	$529	15/14	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	15.5x15.9x17
Daewoo Electronics	CMC-1704C	$899	17/16.2	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	17.6x16.8x17.7
Daytek Electronics	DT-1531	$396	15/13.9	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV	12.5x14.2x14.7
Daytek Electronics	DT-1704C	$849	17/16.3	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT, RO	14.7x16.5x17.5
Dell Computer	Ultrascan 15TX Trinitron	$449	15/13.9	0.26	1,024x768	PN, RO	*
Dell Computer	17LS	$699	17/15.7	0.28	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, DG, CT, RO	*
Dell Computer	17HS Trinitron	$849	17/16.9	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, BA, PN, DG, SV, CT, RO	16.8x15.9x17.7
Delta Products	DB-1765EA	$799	17/16.1	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, DG, SV, CT, +	15x16.5x17.2
Digital Equipment	51V	$439	15/13.8	0.28	800x600	OS	15.1x14.5x15.4
Digital Equipment	51C	$479	15/14	0.28	1,024x768	ZO, TZ, PN, OS, DG, CT	14.7x14.2x15.2
Digital Equipment	71C	$889	17/16.2	0.28	1,024x768	FO, ZO, TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, CT	17.5x16.3x16.5
Digital Equipment	71P	$1,029	17/16	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, BA, PN, OS, CV, CT	16.8x1x17.8
Eizo Nanao	FlexScan FX-B5	$639	15/13.7	0.28	1,024x768	CL, CV, BA, DG, PN, CT, TR, +	14.8x14.4x16.1
Eizo Nanao	FlexScan TX-C7S	$1,299	17/15.9	0.25	1,280x1,024	CV, DG, PN, SV, TR, +	16.3x16.1x18.4
Hitachi America	Accuvue GX17L	$765	17/16	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, DG	16x17x19
Hyundai Electronics	DeluxScan 15G	$399	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	14.7x14.4x15.1
Hyundai Electronics	DeluxScan 17	$599	17/15.8	0.28	1,024x768	FO, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, +	16.7x16.1x18.7
Hyundai Electronics	DeluxScan 17Pro	$759	17/15.8	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	16.7x16.1x18.7
IBM	G50	$459	15/13.4	0.28	800x600	BA, PN, SV, OS, TR	14.4x14.1x15.5
IBM	P50	$529	15/13.6	0.26	1,024x768	CL, BA, DG, FO, PN, OS, CT, RO	14.7x14.5x15.3
IBM	G70	$819	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	CL, BA, DG, FO, PN, SV, OS, TR	16.4x16x17.8
IBM	P70	$1,069	17/15.9	0.26	1,280x1,024	CL, CV, BA, DG, FO, PN, SV, OS, CT, TR, RO	16.8x15.9x17.7
Icon	ID-1561	$895	15/12.9	0.28	1,024x768	FO, TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG	12x15x16
Iiyama North America	VisionMaster 15	$459	15/14	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	14.8x14.4x15.2
Iiyama North America	VisionMaster 17	$849	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT, +	16.6x16.2x16.3
Iiyama North America	VisionMaster Pro 17	$949	17/16	0.25	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT, +	16.6x16.2x16.8

Note: "CRT Data" lists the mfr. rated CRT size, followed by the actual viewable area, in inches. All units listed have horizontal and vertical positioning, brightness, contrast, and power on/off controls. "Max. NI Res. @ 75Hz" lists the monitor's maximum noninterlaced resolution at a 75Hz refresh rate. Tube size and other data provided by manufacturers. **BA** = barrel adjustment; **CL** = color matching; **CT** = color temperature; **CV** = convergence; **DG** = degauss; **FO** = focus/dynamic focus; **OS** = overscan; **PN** = pincushioning; **RO** = rotation/tilt; **SV** = save settings; **TZ** = trapezoid; **ZO** = zoom; **+** = more; ***** = info. not provided

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MONITORS

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	CRT DATA	DOT/STRIPE PITCH (MM)	MAX. NI RES. @ 75HZ	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS	DIMENSIONS (HWD, IN.)
KDS	VSX-5	$389	15/13.9	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, DG, CT	14.5x16x16
KDS	VSX-7	$649	17/15.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, DG, CT	16.2x17.9x16.7
LG Electronics USA	1505s	$399	15/*	0.28	800x600	None	15.3x14.6x15.5
LG Electronics USA	Studioworks 56i	$430	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	ZO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, CT, +	12.9x14.2x15.2
LG Electronics USA	Studioworks 76m	$790	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	ZO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	15x16.1x16.1
LG Electronics USA	Studioworks 78i	$880	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	ZO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	15x16.1x16.1
Mag InnoVision	DX1595	$399	15/13.9	0.28	1,024x768	PN, OS, DG, SV	14.3x14.3x15.3
Mag InnoVision	DX15T-M	$399	15/14	0.25	1,280x1,024	TZ, PN, OS, DG, CT, CL	14.6x14.2x16.9
Mag InnoVision	DX1795	$699	17/16.1	0.26	1,024x768	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.9x16x17.1
Mag InnoVision	MXP17F	$859	17/16.1	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV	17.3x17.3x18.8
Mag InnoVision	DJ702	$949	17/16.1	0.26	1,024x768	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.9x16x17.1
Maxtech	XT-5800	$369	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, DG	*
Maxtech	XT-7800	$699	17/15.8	0.28	1,280x1,024	CL, PN, DG, RO, +	*
MiTac	R1555GV	$289	15/14.0	0.28	1,280x1,024	PN, BA, +	15x14.6x15.0
MiTac	L1769GD	$579	17/15.0	0.28	1,280x1,024	TZ, PN, BA, RO, DG +	17x18.0x16.5
MiTac	MVM-L1766-PD	$599	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, PN, DG, SV	17x15.7x16.7
Mitsubishi Electronics	DiamondScan 15VX	$410	15/13.8	0.28	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, SV, CT, +	14.6x14.3x15.6
Mitsubishi Electronics	DiamondScan 17HX	$799	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	16x16.1x16.7
Mitsubishi Electronics	DiamondPro 17TX	$899	17/16	0.25	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	16x16.1x16.7
Mitsubishi Electronics	PrecisePoint 8705	$2,000	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	16x16.1x16.7
NEC Technologies	MultiSync XV15+	$499	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	15.3x14.6x16.3
NEC Technologies	MultiSync M500	$549	15/13.8	0.25	1,024x768	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, +	17.6x14.8x16.5
NEC Technologies	MultiSync XV17+	$849	17/15.6	0.28	1,024x768	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	17.1x16.4x19.3
NEC Technologies	MultiSync M700	$899	17/15.6	0.25	1,024x768	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, +	19.1x16.8x19.5
NEC Technologies	MultiSync XP17	$1,099	17/15.6	0.28	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	17x16.4x19.3
Nokia Display Products	Multigraph 449E	$499	15/13.4	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, DG, SA	14.5x14.6x15.3
Nokia Display Products	Multigraph 449X	$599	15/13.5	0.25	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, CV, DG, CT	14.6x14.6x15.7
Nokia Display Products	Valuegraph 447L	$699	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	BA, PN, DG, +	16.1x16.9x18.3
Nokia Display Products	Valuegraph 447W	$799	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	CL, BA, PN, DG, +	16.9x16.8x19
NSA/Hitachi	SuperScan Pro 15	$459	15/13.7	0.28	1,024x768	FO, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, RO	13.9x14.1x14.7
NSA/Hitachi	SuperScan Pro 17	$779	17/15.6	0.28	1,024x768	FO, TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, RO	15.7x16x16.6
NSA/Hitachi	SuperScan Elite 17	$975	17/15.9	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO	16.7x16x18.1
Packard Bell Electronics	1512SL	$350	15/13.5	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, OS	14.4x14:6x16.6
Panasonic	PanaSync E15	$359	15/12.8	0.27	1,024x768	None	14.9x14.6x16.2
Panasonic	PanaSync S17	$729	17/14.8	0.24	1,024x768	TZ, PN, CT, +	16.4x16.1x17.5
Panasonic	PanaMedia PM17	$799	17/15.9	0.27	1,024x768	TZ, PN, CT, +	16.7x17.2x17.2
Panasonic	PanaSync P17	$899	17/14.8	0.25	1,280x1,024	TZ, DG, CT, +	16.4x16.1x17.5
Panasonic	PanaFlat PF17	$1,299	17/14.8	0.24	1,280x1,024	TZ, PN, DG, CT, +	16.3x16.1x17.1
Philips Consumer Electronics	Magnavox CM2015	$399	15/14	0.28	800x600	None	15.5x14.5x15.4
Philips Consumer Electronics	Magnavox CM1215	$429	15/13.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, DG, RO, +	15.5x14.7x15.3
Philips Consumer Electronics	Brilliance 15A	$499	15/13.7	0.28	1,024x768	DG, PN, TZ, RO	15x14x15.5
Philips Consumer Electronics	Magnavox CM4018	$749	17/16.2	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, DG, CT, +	16.7x16.6x17.3
Philips Consumer Electronics	Brilliance 17A	$999	17/16.2	0.26	1,280x1,024	BA, DG, FO, PN, SV, CT, TZ, RO, +	16.5x16.5x17
Pixie Technologies	PBC-1764	$599	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, DG, SV	17.5x17x16.5
Portrait Display Labs	Pivot 1700	$999	17/15.9	0.26	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, CV, DG, SV	19x18x18
Princeton Graphic Systems	EO15	$369	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	14.9x14.4x16
Princeton Graphic Systems	Ultra 70F	$599	17/16.1	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.9x16x17.1
Princeton Graphic Systems	Ultra 17+	$668	17/15.8	0.28	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	15x14.4x15.6
Princeton Graphic Systems	EO17	$669	17/15.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.9x16x17.1
Princeton Graphic Systems	EO75	$799	17/15.8	0.26	1,600x1,200	TZ, CL, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.9x16x17.1
Proton	GM-1562M	$449	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	PN, DG, SV, +	14.5x14x15.2
Proton	AM-1782	$749	17/15.8	0.26	1,280x1,024	DG	16.1x16.5x17.4
Proview	1568	$350	15/13.7	0.28	*	PN	15.2x14.2x15.6
Radius	Pressview 17SR	$2,499	17/16	0.26	1,360x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT	22x22x22
Sampo Technology	AlphaScan 500	$349	15/13.8	0.28	800x600	PN	13.8x14.3x15.4
Sampo Technology	AlphaScan 520	$395	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, OS, DG, SV	14.7x14.6x15.2

Note: "CRT Data" lists the mfr. rated CRT size, followed by the actual viewable area, in inches. All units listed have horizontal and vertical positioning, brightness, contrast, and power on/off controls. "Max. NI Res. @ 75Hz" lists the monitor's maximum noninterlaced resolution at a 75Hz refresh rate. Tube size and other data provided by manufacturers. **BA** = barrel adjustment; **CL** = color matching; **CT** = color temperature; **CV** = convergence; **DG** = degauss; **FO** = focus/dynamic focus; **OS** = overscan; **PN** = pincushioning; **RO** = rotation/tilt; **SV** = save settings; **TZ** = trapezoid; **ZO** = zoom; **+** = more; ***** = info. not provided

(continued on page 140)

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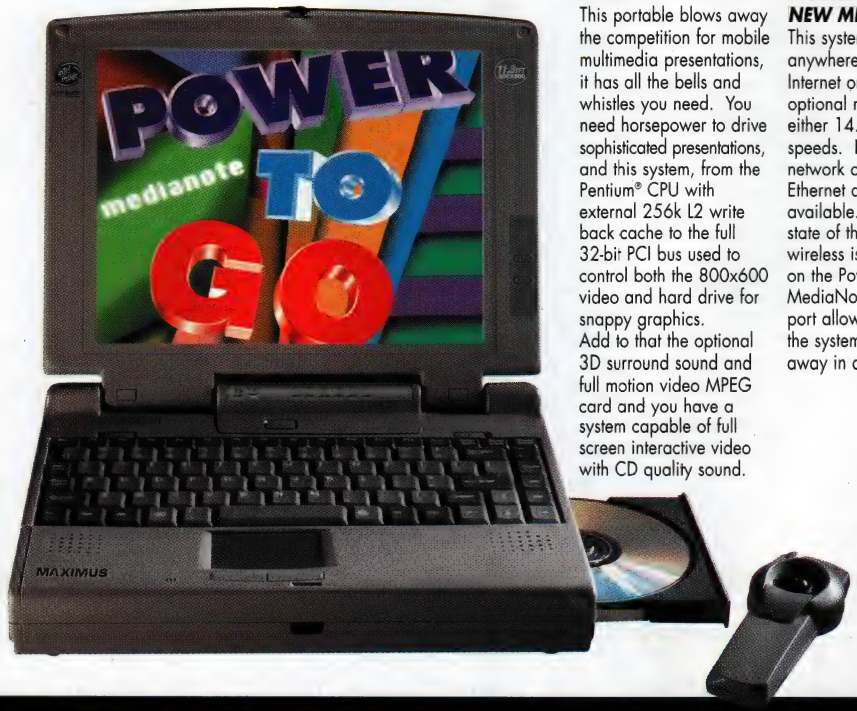

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MONITORS

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	CRT DATA	DOT/STRIPE PITCH (MM)	MAX. NI RES. @ 75HZ	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS	DIMENSIONS (HWD, IN.)
Sampo Technology	AlphaScan 730	$799	17/16.1	0.25	1,152x870	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT, RO	16.1x17.9x15.8
Sampo Technology	AlphaScan 760	$899	17/16.1	0.25	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, OS, CV, DG, SV, CT, RO	16.1x17.9x15.8
Samsung Electronics	SyncMaster 4Ne	$429	15/13.8	0.28	800x600	TZ, BA, PN, OS, SV	15.2x14.6x15.6
Samsung Electronics	SyncMaster 15GLi	$499	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	15.5x14.7x15.7
Samsung Electronics	SyncMaster 6Ne	$789	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	FO, TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	17.2x17.1x17
Samsung Electronics	SyncMaster 17GLsi	$959	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, CT	17.1x16.6x17
Samtron	SC-528UXL	$444	15/13.6	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	19.1x17.8x17.5
Samtron	SC-728FXL	$779	17/15.7	0.28	1,024x768	FO, TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.5x16.9x17.3
Samtron	SC-726GXL	$899	17/15.7	0.28	1,280x1,024	FO, TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT	16.5x16.9x17.3
Sceptre Technologies	P51	$369	15/13.9	0.26	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, OS, DG, RO	14.5x14.5x15.5
Sceptre Technologies	P73A	$679	17/15.9	0.26	1,280x1,024	PN, TZ, DG, RO, +	14.2x15.7x16.6
Smile International	CA1515DS	$389	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	DG, PN +	14x13.9x14.7
Smile International	CA1516SL	$409	15/13.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, RO	14x13.9x14.7
Smile International	CA1706M2	$745	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, BA, PN, OS, DG, RO	16x16.4x16.4
Sony Electronics	Multiscan 15sx	$429	15/13.9	0.25	1,024x768	BA, PN, DG, RO	14.9x14.7x15.4
Sony Electronics	Multiscan 15sfll	$549	15/13.9	0.25	1,024x768	PN, SV, CT, RO	14.9x14.7x15.4
Sony Electronics	Multiscan 17sfll	$879	17/16	0.25	1,024x768	BA, PN, SV, CT, RO	17x16.2x18
Sony Electronics	Multiscan 17sell	$1,099	17/16.1	0.25	1,280x1,024	CL, BA, PN, CV, SV, CT, RO	17.1x16.1x18
Tatung	Audio 15 Plus	$549	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	FO, TZ, CL, PN	14x15x15
Tatung	CM17MVR	$895	17/15.9	0.28	1,280x1,024	TZ, PN, DG, RO, +	*
Techmedia Computer	TCM-1500N	$350	15/13.7	0.28	1,280x1,024	TZ, BA, PN, DG, SV, RO	14.1x14.5x16.9
Techmedia Computer	TCM-1700G	$599	17/15.9	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, CV, DG, SV, RO	16x15.8x16.8
TTX Computer Products	TTX7562GM	$399	15/13.7	0.28	1,024x768	BA, PN	15.1x14.5x15.2
TTX Computer Products	TTX5700	$799	17/15.7	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, BA, PN, DG, SV, CT	16.9x16.1x17.3
ViewSonic	Optiquest V655	$375	15/13.6	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, OS, SV	14.8x14.9x15.2
ViewSonic	ViewSonic 15GS	$449	15/13.7	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	15x14.6x15.9
ViewSonic	ViewSonic 17GS	$699	17/16	0.27	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	16.4x16.1x17.5
ViewSonic	Optiquest V775	$699	17/16	0.26	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	17x16.3x17.4
ViewSonic	ViewSonic 17GA	$799	17/16	0.27	1,024x768	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, DG, SV, CT, RO, +	16.4x17.2x17.2
ViewSonic	ViewSonic PT770	$895	17/16	0.25	1,280x1,024	TZ, CL, BA, PN, OS, CV, DG, SV, RO, +	16.7x16.1x17.1
Wen Technology	JD156	$450	15/14.5	0.28	1,024x768	PN	15x14.6x16.2
Wen Technology	JD176MM	$750	17/16.2	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, OS, DG	17.2x16.6x18.5
Wyse Technology	WYSEvision WY-15E	$479	15/13.8	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, BA, PN, CV, DG, SV, CT	26.7x16.1x17.1
Wyse Technology	WYSEvision WY-17E	$849	17/15.9	0.28	1,024x768	TZ, PN, DG, SV, CT	16.5x16.2x16.7

Note: "CRT Data" lists the mfr. rated CRT size, followed by the actual viewable area, in inches. All units listed have horizontal and vertical positioning, brightness, contrast, and power on/off controls. "Max. NI Res. @ 75Hz" lists the monitor's maximum noninterlaced resolution at a 75Hz refresh rate. Tube size and other data provided by manufacturers. **BA** = barrel adjustment; **CL** = color matching; **CT** = color temperature; **CV** = convergence; **DG** = degauss; **FO** = focus/dynamic focus; **OS** = overscan; **PN** = pincushioning; **RO** = rotation/tilt; **SV** = save settings; **TZ** = trapezoid; **ZO** = zoom; **+** = more; ***** = info. not provided

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Dell Computer 800-289-3355
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Sceptre Technologies 800-788-2878
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	70ns	34.00	Call
1Mx9	60ns	22.00	Call
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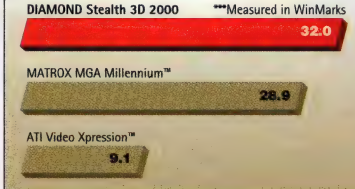

3D Hardware Features Comparison

	Stealth 3D Family	MATROX MGA Millennium
Gouraud Shading	◆	◆
Perspective Correction	◆	
Alpha Blending	◆	
Mip Mapping	◆	
Bilinear Filtering	◆	
Z-Buffering	◆	◆

Stealth 3D 2000/3000 Comparison

	Stealth 3D 2000XL	Stealth 3D 3000XL
Memory	Silicon Magic DRAM	VRAM
RAMDAC	135 MHz	220 MHz
Max Memory	4MB	8MB
Max Resolution	1280 x 1024	1600 x 1200
Bundled Software*	• Descent II • Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1996 • Destruction Derby	• Descent II • Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1996 • 3D F/X • Digital Video Producer • MS Internet Explorer

Look for these logos on a new class of applications designed to take advantage of Stealth 3D graphics.

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the Picture Perfect PC

Choosing the Right Graphics Card for Your System

By Jan Ozer

High-quality graphics and video are no longer relegated to high-end CAD workstations and publishing studios; they're now common features of both home and office PCs. But the professionals' rule still applies: To select a graphics card, match the desired features with the intended use.

3-D is Key

The big news these days is 3-D acceleration—onboard hardware that speeds functions such as texture-mapping and polygon-rendering, boosting the performance, visual quality, and realism of applications that depict 3-D environments and objects. This hardware can be found in dedicated 3-D accelerator chips and built into multipurpose graphics chip sets.

Games are clearly fueling the 3-D trend. Pentium-class PCs paired with 3-D accelerators can, for the first time, match the graphical horsepower of game consoles like Sony's PlayStation and Sega's Saturn, while offering much greater functionality.

Enabling today's onslaught of new 3-D chip sets and applications is the release of Microsoft's Direct3D application programming interface (API) for Windows 95. Before Direct3D, chip and graphics card suppliers published proprietary APIs that were generally supported only by specific games or CAD packages. Direct3D will bind graphics-card and application developers together, ensuring a stable platform for growth.

The Path to 3-D

It's likely that 3-D accelerators will eventually split into three overlapping markets. The first one will be products targeted at hard-core game players. Diamond helped create this market with the introduction of its Edge 3D card, a multimedia accelerator based upon Nvidia's NV1 chipset. The Edge combines 3-D graphics with wavetable sound and digital joystick input for use with both PCs and Sega game pads.

Newer add-on boards, near release at press time, promise to take serious PC gamers to the next level. Diamond's Monster 3D and Orchid's Righteous 3D, for example, will plug into a second slot inside the PC. These two cards' pass-through connectors will let the system's primary graphics card handle everyday applications while their 3dfx Voodoo chip sets kick in for demanding, visually dazzling games.

A second product category, at the top of the 3-D spectrum, includes professional products for real-time 3-D visualization,

animation creation and rendering, and computer-aided design and engineering. Elsa's GLoria card, for example, combines 3D Labs' GLint Delta coprocessor with S3's Trio64 for 2-D and video acceleration to deliver workstationlike performance. The $1,999 GLoria is loaded with 4MB of DRAM for 2-D graphics and 4MB of faster VRAM for 3-D imaging.

The third group contains midrange or mainstream graphics cards, typically based on single accelerator chips—such as S3's ViRGE—that boost all three display areas—2-D, 3-D, and video. Virtually all graphics-card manufacturers offer products in this category, with prices starting around $200 for models such as Diamond's Stealth 3D 2000 (equipped with 2MB of EDO DRAM).

At the high end, buyers are advised to remember the no-free-lunch rule: Fast as they are compared with last year's cards, you shouldn't expect $300 products to replace workstation controllers costing $3,000. If you're a gamer, you'll also want to check which games are supported by any 3-D accelerator on your shopping list. Although Direct3D ensures long-term compatibility, it could take months until every game title supports the new standard.

Long-Term Memory

The amount and type of display memory it carries can be a board's most confusing statistic. Memory requirements are dictated by the resolution and color depth you prefer: A 1,024x768-pixel display contains more data than a 640x480 VGA screen, and 1,280x1,024 resolution contains more data still. Multiply the resolution times the color palette or bits per pixel—8 bits for 256 colors, 16 bits for 65,536 colors, 24 bits for 16.7 million colors or true color—to get the minimal RAM requirement.

Cards with only 1MB of display memory, capable of true color at a maximum 640x480 resolution, are vanishing fast. Consider 2MB a minimum, and think seriously about a 4MB card if you'll be working with 16- or 24-bit graphics at high resolutions or using 3-D. Real-time 3-D graphics are amazing memory-guzzlers.

If you see a new, big-screen monitor in your future, or other changes that will increase your graphics requirements, either splurge on memory up front or make sure the card supports user-installable memory upgrades. Otherwise you may have to send the card back to the factory or, more costly yet, buy a new one.

The type of display memory controls how quickly the graphics controller can update the display, which affects not only performance but refresh rate—the measure of screen stability, involving how many times per second the screen image is redrawn. On one hand, a noninterlaced refresh rate of 75Hz is the minimum to avoid the eyestrain and fatigue that a flickering screen can cause; on the other hand, anything above perhaps 90Hz is unnoticeable luxury.

The higher the resolution and color depth, the harder a card must work to sustain a high refresh rate. Some cards advertise astoundingly high refresh rates such as 120Hz at 640x480 resolution, but it's best to focus on the resolution and palette you prefer.

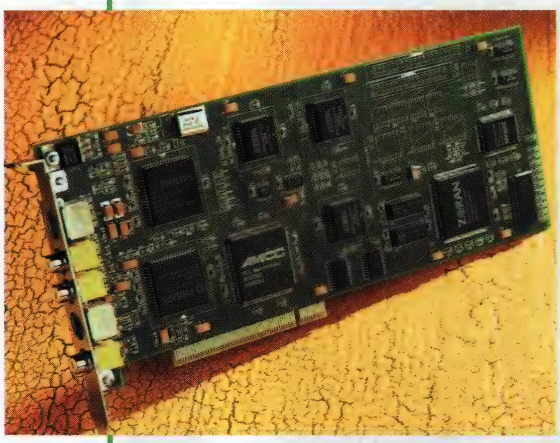
Video Editing on the PC

Compared with the breakneck pace with which new graphics cards arrive in the marketplace, the advances in video-capture boards seem almost poky. Nearly two years after the PCI bus became the accepted high-end architecture, there were few if any PCI-based capture cards, and none close to the magic $1,000 mark. Today, however, budget-conscious video editors and multimedia developers have several attractive options.

When purchasing a video-capture card, the key issue you need to consider is intended use. Developers capturing quarter-screen, 15 frames-per-second (fps) video for CD-ROM titles can get away with an inexpensive ISA-based board--one reason Intel's Smart Video Recorder Pro (about $450) has endured. But if you need 30-fps capture for conversion to MPEG-1, or you plan to edit video digitally for transfer back to analog tape, you'll need a more capable card.

During digitization, higher capture-data rates translate directly into better video quality, which is why PCI-bus boards outperform ISA cards. Bus mastering, which enables products like Truevision's $999-list Bravado 1000 to increase overall system throughput, is a definite plus.

One frequent problem with digitized video is audio/video synchronization. Products such as Fast Electronics' $1,099-list AV Master, with onboard audio circuitry, minimize this problem by synchronizing audio and video during capture, which is more precise than trying to sync your video with audio that has been digitized using a separate sound card.



Truevision Bravado 1000

Capture cards are inevitably bundled with capture, editing, and compression software. The most technically proficient digital video-editing package is Adobe's 32-bit Premiere 4.2, which comes with Miro's $799-list miroVideo DC20. ULead's MediaStudio Pro also earns high marks for ease of use and functionality, and InSync's Razor is a favorite choice among creative power users.

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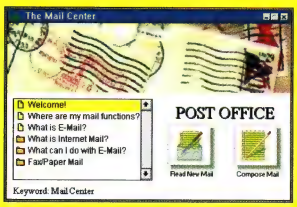

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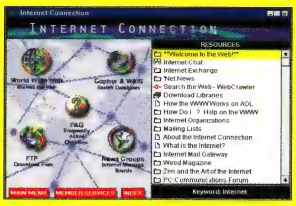

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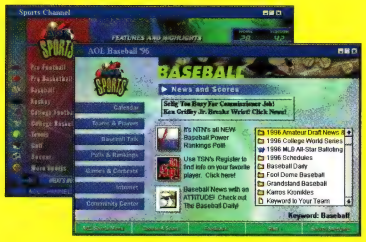

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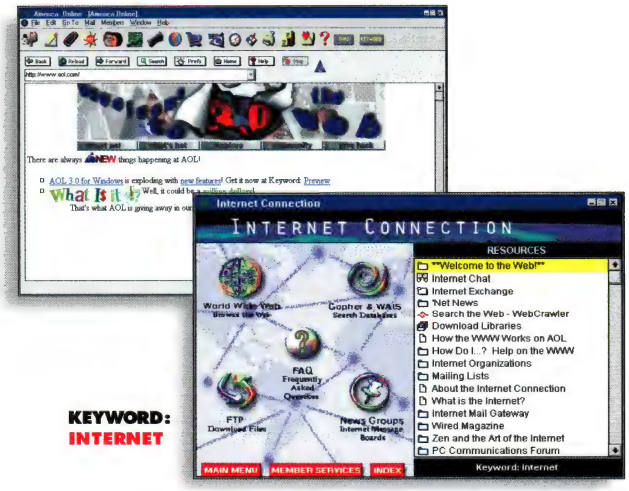

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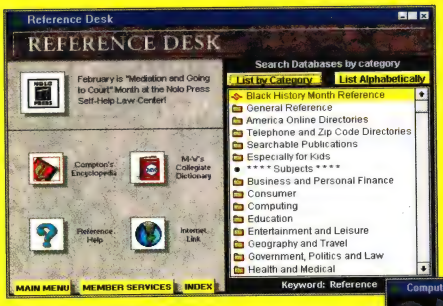

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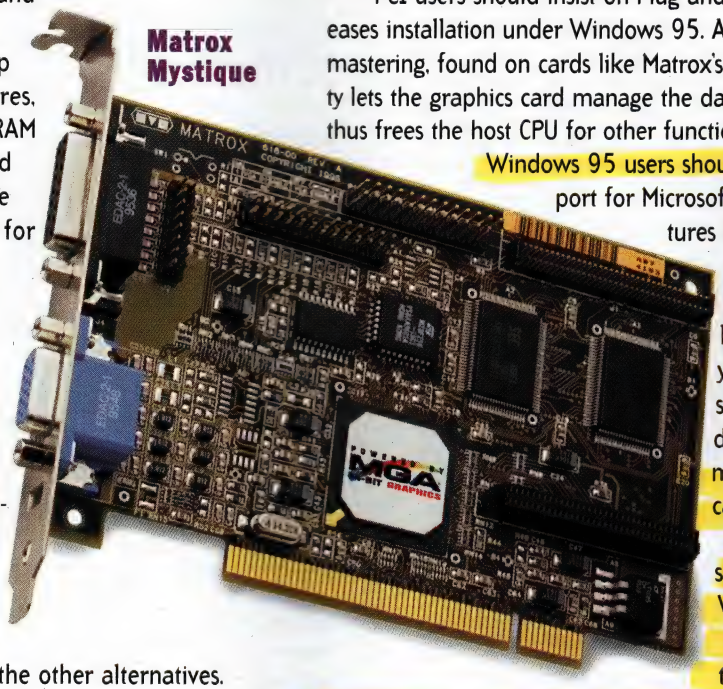
Inexpensive dynamic RAM (DRAM) is the slowest type, taking two processor cycles to update each memory cell. DRAM-based cards are fine for business applications such as word processing but can drop to uncomfortably low refresh rates at high resolutions with more than 256 colors.

The fastest, most expensive graphics accelerators use dual-ported video RAM (VRAM), which updates memory cells in only one processor cycle, enabling VRAM to handle the toughest display tasks—including 3-D functions such as texture-mapping—without dropping below 75Hz.

Other, newer memory types, splitting the price/performance difference between DRAM and VRAM, fall into two main categories. The first, DRAM derivatives, include extended-data-out (EDO) DRAM, burst-EDO (BEDO) DRAM, and synchronous DRAM (SDRAM) memory, as well as multibank and Rambus memory (MDRAM and RDRAM respectively).

The second group, made up of truly new memory architectures, includes synchronous graphics RAM (SGRAM), which is single-ported like DRAM, but has a block-write feature similar to that of VRAM for accelerated area fills and text-painting. SGRAM also uses an internal clock to synchronize data transfer, enabling high transfer rates.

Another new architecture, Windows RAM or WRAM, is dual-ported and features double-buffering, which improves video and 3-D performance. It's currently used only by Matrox, and its price advantage over VRAM isn't as great as that of some of the other alternatives.



Matrox Mystique

Moving to MPEG

With 2-D acceleration taken for granted and 3-D coming on strong, don't overlook video acceleration. Most general-purpose chip sets today speed up functions such as video scaling to smooth out the playback of video clips at full-screen rather than postage-stamp size.

Perhaps the best-known full-screen video format, the Motion Picture Experts Group's MPEG-1, requires calculation-intensive, on-the-fly decompression. Today's 133MHz or faster Pentium PCs provide adequate playback of MPEG-1 video using the software-based decoders shipped with most modern graphics cards, either as part of Microsoft's ActiveMovie specification or as a standalone player from utility vendors such as Xing and CompCore.

For maximum-quality game- or movie-viewing, however, MPEG mavens may want to consider a card with dedicated MPEG-1 hardware, permitting a true TV-quality 30 frames per second instead of the software decoders' 20-something. Boards like Matrox's Mystique ($249 with 2MB of SGRAM) and Hercules' Terminator 3D (starting at $199) offer optional MPEG-1 daughtercards costing under $120. You'll start hearing about MPEG-2 video as part of the DVD standard next year.

Looking Through Windows

Other factors to consider when buying a graphics card begin with the basics—bus and operating system. Many manufacturers are dropping their older ISA or VL-Bus cards in favor of PCI boards only, and some products may ship without support for Windows 3.1 or OS/2.

PCI users should insist on Plug and Play support, which eases installation under Windows 95. A new feature is bus-mastering, found on cards like Matrox's Mystique; this capability lets the graphics card manage the data flow from RAM and thus frees the host CPU for other functions.

Windows 95 users should look for full support for Microsoft APIs and architectures such as DirectX and Active-Movie. As these standards have trickled out over the past year, they've spawned stiff driver-development demands, and not all manufacturers have caught up.

Most manufacturers ship drivers for Windows NT, but these may lack extra features that are now common for Windows 95, such as multiple virtual windows and color calibration. If you work or plan to work with NT, make sure to investigate the NT utilities provided with the board.

Finally, though most of today's graphics cards are built around 64-bit silicon, graphics pros who work in high-color, big-screen modes should consider the small but growing group of 128-bit cards. Number Nine's VRAM-based Imagine 128 has consistently outrun 64-bit boards in 2-D benchmark tests, and the company is now or will soon be shipping everything from an economical DRAM variant (the Imagine 128 Series 2e, about $400) to a next-generation 3-D cruncher. Other 128-bit boards based on Tseng Labs' ET6000 chip set, such as VideoLogic's GrafixStar 600 or STB's Lightspeed 128 (each under $200 with 2MB of MDRAM), may offer an even more affordable solution.

GRAPHICS [cards]

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	STD./MAX. RAM	MAX. COLOR BIT DEPTHS	ADDITIONAL FEATURES
Actix Systems	GraphicsEngine 64+ PCI	$169	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/8	None
Actix Systems	Picasso 64+ AVC	$199	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/15/8	S/MPEG, VC
Actix Systems	GraphicsEngine Ultra 64+ AV	$269	2MB/4MB VRAM	24/16/15/8	S/MPEG
Actix Systems	GraphicsEngine Ultra 3D	$299	2MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/15/8	3D, S/MPEG
Alaris	Matinee Pro	$119	1MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/24/8/NA	S/MPEG
Appian Graphics	Jeronimo J2-4MB Dual	$590	4MB/8MB RAMBUS	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, VC)
Asicom	Totem64V	$89	2MB/4MB DRAM	24/24/16/NA	S/MPEG
ASUS Computer	PCI-V264C+	$119	1MB/2MB DRAM	*	S/MPEG, VC
ASUS Computer	PCI-AV264CTN	$139	1MB/2MB DRAM	*	S/MPEG, VC, FM
ASUS Computer	PCI-V264VT	$159	1MB/2MB EDO DRAM	*	S/MPEG, VC
ASUS Computer	PCI-AV264VT	$179	1MB/2MB EDO DRAM	*	S/MPEG, VC, FM, (WT)
ASUS Computer	PCI-V264GT	$189	2MB/4MB SGRAM	*	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, TV, VC)
ASUS Computer	PCI-AV264GT	$199	2MB/4MB SGRAM	*	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, TV, VC)
ATI Technologies	3D Xpression PC2TV	$229	2MB/4MB SDRAM	24/24/24/NA	3D, S/MPEG, NTSC/O, (TV, VC)
Boca Research	Voyager Movie Player	$209	1MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/8/8	H/MPEG, VC, 3DSO
Cardexpert Technology	Thunder CV	$95	2MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG
Cardexpert Technology	Genesis EV Trio64V+	$115	2MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, TV, VC)
Cardexpert Technology	Genesis SV 3D Virge	$145	2MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, TV, VC)
Cardexpert Technology	Challenger EV ET6000	$195	2.25MB/4MB MDRAM	24/24/24/16	S/MPEG
Cardexpert Technology	Genesis/V 968	$259	2MB/4MB VRAM	24/24/16/16	S/MPEG
Colorgraphic Communications	Pro Lightning PCI	$695	4MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	MS
Colorgraphic Communications	Quad Pro Lightning PCI	$995	8MB/8MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	MS
Creative Labs	Graphics Blaster MA302	$150	2MB/2MB RAMBUS	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG
Creative Labs	3D Blaster PCI	*	4MB/* EDO DRAM	24/16/16/NA	3D, S/MPEG
DFI	WG-1210P	$69	2MB/* EDO DRAM	24/16/NA/NA	None
DFI	WG-3220PV/3D	$159	2MB/* EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG, 3DSO, (H/MPEG)
Diamond Multimedia	Stealth 3D 2000XL	$169	2MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG
Diamond Multimedia	Stealth64 Video 2201XL	$179	2MB/* DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, TV)
Diamond Multimedia	Stealth 3D 2000XL	$199	4MB/* EDO DRAM	24/24/16/NA	3D, S/MPEG
Diamond Multimedia	Stealth 3D 3000XL	$269	2MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/8	3D, S/MPEG
Diamond Multimedia	Stealth64 Video 3400XL	$349	4MB/* VRAM	24/24/24/16	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
Diamond Multimedia	Stealth 3D 3000XL	$369	4MB/* VRAM	24/24/24/16	3D, S/MPEG
ELSA	Victory 3D	$329	4MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG
ELSA	Winner 2000Pro/X	$399	2MB/2MB VRAM	24/16/8/8	S/MPEG
Focus Information Systems	Roadrunner S3 64V+	$75	1MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/NA/NA	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
Focus Information Systems	Roadrunner 3D	$179	2MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
Focus Information Systems	True Speed	$189	2MB/4MB MDRAM	24/*/*/*	S/MPEG
Genoa Systems	Phantom 3D	$165	4MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG
Genoa Systems	Phantom 128	$265	4MB/4MB MDRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG
Genoa Systems	Phantom 3D Pro	$365	8MB/8MB VRAM	24/24/24/8	3D, S/MPEG
Hercules Computer Tech.	Terminator 64/Video	$109	2MB/* EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
Hercules Computer Tech.	Terminator 3D	$159	2MB/* EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
Hercules Computer Tech.	Dynamite 128/Video	$189	2MB/* MDRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG
Hercules Computer Tech.	Terminator 3D	$199	4MB/* EDO DRAM	24/24/16/NA	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
Hercules Computer Tech.	Dynamite 128/Video	$249	4MB/* MDRAM	24/24/16/NA	S/MPEG
InSync Technologies	VGA Image I/O	$849	2MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/NA/NA	3D, VC, SV/I
Integrated Micro Solutions	TwinTurbo 128P2	$349	2MB/4MB VRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG, H/MPEG
Integrated Micro Solutions	TwinTurbo 128P4	$499	4MB/4MB VRAM	24/24/24/16	3D, S/MPEG, H/MPEG
Integrated Micro Solutions	TwinTurbo 128P8	$799	8MB/8MB VRAM	24/24/24/24	3D, S/MPEG, H/MPEG
Jazz Multimedia	G-Force 128	$159	2MB/4MB MDRAM	24/24/24/8	S/MPEG
Jazz Multimedia	Jakarta	$499	2MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, H/MPEG, (TV, VC, NTSC/O)
Matrox Graphics	Mystique	$199	2MB/4MB SGRAM	24/16/16/NA	3D, S/MPEG, NTSC/O, (H/MPEG, TV, VC)
Matrox Graphics	Millennium	$219	2MB/8MB WGRAM	24/24/24/24	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, TV, VC)
MicroLabs	Ultimate TrueColor/XL/PCI	$109	1MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/8/NA	None
MicroLabs	Ultimate TrueColor/XLp/PCI	$139	2MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/8/NA	None

Note: Max. Color Bit Depths denotes the highest possible color bit depth at 800x600/1,024x768/1,280x1,024/1,600x1,280 (or 1,600x1,200), noninterlaced, at a 75Hz refresh rate. Additional features in parentheses are extra-cost options. All cards are PCI bus cards. **FM** = FM synthesis; **H/MPEG** = hardware MPEG; **MS** = multiscreen capability; **NA** = not applicable; **NTSC/O** = NTSC out; **S/MPEG** = software MPEG; **SV/I** = S-Video input; **3D** = 3-D acceleration; **3DSO** = 3-D sound; **TV** = TV tuner; **VC** = video capture; **WT** = wavetable; * = info. not provided

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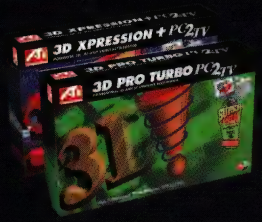
COMPARISON	3D XPRESSION+ PC2TV	3D PRO TURBO PC2TV
Use	Games, Home, Business	Power Users, Engineers, Graphics Professionals
Maximum 3D Resolution	1024x768	1600x1200
Maximum Resolution	1600x1200 @ 60Hz	1600x1200 @ 75Hz
Memory	2MB or 4MB (2MB upgradable to 4MB)	4MB or 8MB (4MB upgradable to 6/8MB)



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GRAPHICS [cards]

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	STD./MAX. RAM	MAX. COLOR BIT DEPTHS	ADDITIONAL FEATURES
MicroLabs	Ultimate WinVideo 2.5	$179	2.5MB/4MB MDRAM	24/24/16/NA	S/MPEG
MicroLabs	Ultimate WinVideo 4	$279	4MB/4MB MDRAM	24/24/24/NA	S/MPEG
miro Computer Products	miroMedia 3D	$199	2MB/* EDO DRAM	*	3D, NTSC/O, (TV)
Number Nine	9FX Reality 332	$199	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG
Number Nine	9FX Reality 772	$299	2MB/4MB *	24/24/16/16	3D, S/MPEG
Number Nine	Imagine 128 Series 2e	$399	4MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/24/16/8	3D, S/MPEG
Number Nine	Imagine 128 Series 2	$699	4MB/4MB EDO VRAM	24/24/16/16	3D, S/MPEG
Orchid Technology	Kelvin Video64	$105	1MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/NA/NA	S/MPEG
Orchid Technology	Kelvin Video64	$135	2MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/NA/NA	S/MPEG
Orchid Technology	Fahrenheit Video 3D	$189	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG, (H/MPEG, TV)
Prolink Computer	PixelView Combo VTV	$95	1MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, S/MPEG, NTSC/O
Prolink Computer	PixelView Combo TV Plus	$195	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/8	3D, S/MPEG, TV, VC
Sierra Online	Screamin 3D	$199	4MB/4MB EDO DRAM	32/16/8/NA	3D, (S/MPEG)
SIIG	Aurora 2000	$139	1MB/2MB DRAM	16/8/NA/NA	None
SIIG	Aurora 4000	$189	2MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
SIIG	Aurora 4000 Plus	$279	4MB/4MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, (H/MPEG)
STB Systems	PowerGraph 64 Video	$99	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, H/MPEG
STB Systems	LightSpeed 128	$179	2.25MB/2.25MB MDRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG, H/MPEG
STB Systems	Velocity 64 Video	$249	2MB/4MB VRAM	24/24/24/16	S/MPEG, H/MPEG
STB Systems	Velocity 3D	$249	4MB/8MB VRAM	24/24/24/16	3D, S/MPEG, H/MPEG
VideoLabs	T230 Pro Video Capture	$369	2MB/2MB DRAM	24/16/8/NA	VC
VideoLogic	GrafixStar 400	$79	1MB/2MB EDO DRAM	16/8/4/NA	(H/MPEG)
VideoLogic	GrafixStar 400	$99	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	(H/MPEG)
VideoLogic	GrafixStar 400 MPEG Star	$149	1MB/2MB EDO DRAM	16/8/4/NA	H/MPEG
VideoLogic	GrafixStar 400 MPEG Star	$169	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	H/MPEG
VideoLogic	GrafixStar 600	$179	2MB/4MB MDRAM	24/16/8/NA	S/MPEG
VideoLogic	GrafixStar 450	$199	2MB/2MB EDO DRAM	24/16/8/NA	3D, (H/MPEG)

Note: Max. Color Bit Depths denotes the highest possible color bit depth at 800x600/1,024x768/1,280x1,024/1,600x1,280 (or 1,600x1,200), noninterlaced, at a 75Hz refresh rate. Additional features in parentheses are extra-cost options. All cards are PCI bus cards. **FM** = FM synthesis; **H/MPEG** = hardware MPEG; **MS** = multiscreen capability; **NA** = not applicable; **NTSC/O** = NTSC out; **S/MPEG** = software MPEG; **SV/I** = S-Video input; **3D** = 3-D acceleration; **3DSO** = 3-D sound; **TV** = TV tuner; **VC** = video capture; **WT** = wavetable; * = info. not provided

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Boca Research 561-997-7202
Cardexpert Technology 510-252-1118
Colorgraphic Communications .. 770-455-3921
Creative Labs 800-998-1000
DFI 916-568-1234
Diamond Multimedia 408-325-7000
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Aberdeen Power6 (9/18/96)

CNET.COM, the definitive online source for news, product reviews and information about computers and the Internet, reviewed ten 166-MHz Pentium-class systems in September 1996. Participants included AST, Dell, Digital, IBM, MidWest Micro, USA Flex and others. And the Aberdeen Power6 system received the coveted **CNET buy it** *award, along with being the pick of the week for all products reviewed.*

CNET says: "There is an obvious standout in our group of 166-MHz class machines: the Aberdeen Power6. Not only is this Cyrix-based PC the fastest system in this roundup, but it's also among the least expensive, at a tantalizing $2,334." Further on, it mentions that the Aberdeen Power6 was actually " faster than the 200-MHz Pentium systems we've seen."

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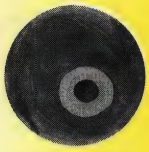

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Pentium® Pro

	Part Number	Chip Set	Dual CPU Sockets	Maximum Memory	72-pin SIMM	EDO/BEDO Memory	ECC/Parity Checking	Flash BIOS	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	Shared ISA/PCI Slots	PCI EIDE Controller	High Speed I/O	PS/2 Mouse Port	PS/2 Keyboard Port	USB Header	Thermal Control	Ir/DA Header	Size	Made in USA	Motherboard Only	w/Intel Pentium Pro 200 MHz CPU	w/Dual Intel Pentium Pro 200 MHz CPU
Asus P/I-P6NP5	*MB6716*	Intel "Natoma" 440FX		256 MB	4	Yes	Yes	Award/NCR	4	2	1	2 ch	Yes	Hdr				Yes	¾ Baby AT		**$335**	**$945**	**N/A**
Asus P/I-XP6NP5	*MB6729*	Intel "Natoma" 440FX		256 MB	4	Yes	Yes	Award/NCR	4	2	1	2 ch	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	ATX 1-deck		**$349**	**$959**	**N/A**
Intel "Venus" Perf'/VS	*MB6953*	Intel "Natoma" 440FX		128 MB	4	Yes	Yes	AMI	3	3	1	2 ch	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	ATX 2-deck		**$319**	**$919**	**N/A**
SuperMicro P6DNE	*MB6130*	Intel "Natoma" 440FX	Yes	768 MB	6	Yes	Yes	AMI	4	3	0	2 ch	Yes	Hdr		Yes	Yes		Baby AT	Yes	**$469**	**$1,079**	**$1,689**
SuperMicro P6DNF	*MB6175*	Intel "Natoma" 440FX	Yes	1 GB	8	Yes	Yes	AMI	4	4	0	2 ch	Yes	Hdr		Yes	Yes		Full AT	Yes	**$579**	**$1,189**	**$1,799**
SuperMicro P6SNE	*MB6124*	Intel "Natoma" 440FX		768 MB	6	Yes	Yes	AMI	4	4	0	2 ch	Yes	Hdr		Yes	Yes		Baby AT	Yes	**$329**	**$939**	**N/A**
SuperMicro P6SNF	*MB6189*	Intel "Natoma" 440FX		1 GB	8	Yes	Yes	AMI	4	4	0	2 ch	Yes	Hdr		Yes	Yes		Full AT	Yes	**$449**	**$1,059**	**N/A**

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Pentium®

	Part Number	Chip Set	Pipelined Burst Cache (KB)	Maximum PB Cache	Max Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM	72-pin SIMM	SDRAM Support	ECC/Parity Checking	Flash BIOS	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	Shared ISA/PCI Slots	PS/2 Mouse Port	USB Header	Other Built-In	Size	Made in USA	Motherboard Only	w/Intel Pentium 75	w/Intel Pentium 120	w/Intel Pentium 133	w/Intel Pentium 150	w/Intel Pentium 166
Asus P/I-P55T2P4	*MB5774*	"Triton II" 430HX	256	512	256		4		Yes	Award	3	2	1	Opt			¾ Baby AT		**$179**	**$289**	**$334**	**$414**	**$494**	**$629**
Asus P/I-P55TVP4	*MB5768*	"Triton VX" 430VX	256	512	128	1	4	Yes		Award	3	2	1	Opt			¾ Baby AT		**$165**	**$275**	**$320**	**$400**	**$480**	**$615**
Intel "Tucson" Adv'd/TC	*MB5965*	"Triton II" 430HX	256	256	128		4			Intel	3	2	1	Yes		Sound	ATX 1-deck		**$235**	**$345**	**$390**	**$470**	**$550**	**$685**
Intel "Marl" Adv'd/ML	*MB5918*	"Triton II" 430HX	256	256	128		4			Intel	3	2	1	Yes			ATX 1-deck		**$175**	**$285**	**$330**	**$410**	**$490**	**$625**
Shuttle Hot 557	*MB5612*	"Triton VX" 430VX	256	512	256	2	4	Yes		Award	3	2	1	Opt	Yes		¾ Baby AT		**$129**	**$239**	**$284**	**$364**	**$444**	**$579**
SuperMicro P55CMS	*MB5184*	"Triton" 430FX	256	512	128		4			AMI	4	4		Opt			Baby AT	Yes	**$179**	**$289**	**$334**	**$414**	**$494**	**$629**
SuperMicro P5STE 256KPB	*MB5914*	"Triton II" 430HX	256	512	768		6		Yes	AMI	4	4		Opt	Yes		Baby AT	Yes	**$195**	**$305**	**$350**	**$430**	**$510**	**$645**
SuperMicro P5STE 512KPB	*MB5936*	"Triton II" 430HX	512	512	768		6		Yes	AMI	4	4		Opt	Yes		Baby AT	Yes	**$225**	**$335**	**$380**	**$460**	**$540**	**$675**

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Hard Copy Bargains

New inkjet and laser printers let you express yourself with style.

By Rick Broida

We use computers to push electrons around. By pushing the power in the right directions, we produce spreadsheets, newsletters, and even art. But a computer can't transform these digital documents into tangible matter; a printer must do that.

Printers produce hard copy in different ways, with varying results. A laser printer, for instance, can deliver fast, top-quality text and graphics, but color is still an expensive option. Inkjets can produce dazzling color, but their text output is slower and slightly (in some cases, considerably) fuzzier. Understandably, the toughest hurdle for most buyers is deciding between the two technologies. The wide array of makes and models on both sides of the fence doesn't make it any easier.

Here's the good news: It's hard to make a bad choice. Because printers have seen more renovation than innovation in the last few years, their underlying technologies are approaching perfection. So instead of worrying about which model is best, you can focus on which is best for you.

Rainbow Printers

It's not hard to understand the popularity of inkjet printers. They're compact, affordable, and—unlike low-priced lasers—able to produce color output. These features alone make them attractive to home users, though it's not uncommon to see an inkjet sitting beside an office laser.

With monochrome inkjets all but vanished from the market, what remains is to decide between two color technologies: single- and dual-cartridge. The latter machines start at just below $300 and employ a pair of cartridges—one black, one tricolor—to achieve true four-color printing.

Conversely, a less-expensive single-cartridge inkjet can make you swap between black and color cartridges depending on the print job, or mix three colors to create a muddy black. That may seem like only a minor inconvenience, but a single-cartridge inkjet's color output is often noticeably poorer. Still, for basic home-printing chores, a single-cartridge unit may fit the bill and the budget, with vendors such as Canon, Hewlett-Packard, and Lexmark offering entry-level models at prices as low as $150.

The caveats to buying an inkjet are few but notable. First, because paper is porous, the sprayed-on ink tends to bleed a bit. Even an inkjet capable of 600x600- or 720x720-dots-per-inch (dpi) resolution will produce sub-laser-quality text. Using special coated paper helps reduce this effect—many inkjets rated for one resolution

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL MILNE

on plain paper support a finer setting on coated stock—but it adds to the cost of consumables.

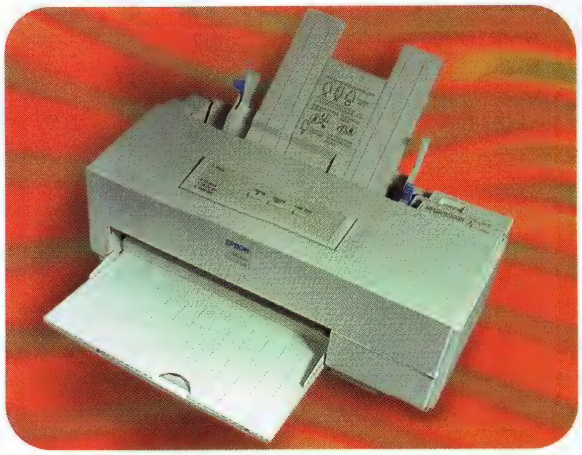
So do ink cartridge prices; cartridges can empty quickly if you do high-volume printing. No one ever accused an inkjet of being too fast, either. At their best, inkjets can print letter-quality text at about four pages per minute (ppm); adding colorful graphics may bump the time to one ppm.

Still, the current crop of inkjet printers represents remarkable value overall. Many manufacturers sweeten the deal by bundling their printers with intelligent color drivers, home or family graphics or greeting-card makers, or other software.

Lexmark's Color Jetprinter 2050 for Windows PCs, for example, sells for less than $250, including a CD-ROM with full-function versions of ArcSoft's PhotoImpression and Hearst's Comic Creator. Epson's new Stylus Color 500 is priced under $300 and ships with the company's Color Pak CD-ROM containing Sierra's Print Artist, Epson's PhotoPlus, and 25 fonts; the Mac version offers Adobe PhotoDeluxe 1.0 and Home Publisher 2.1.

Lexmark Optra E

Texas Instruments microLaser WIN/4



Epson Stylus 500

The Laser Craze

If your output objectives include quick, economical, business-correspondence-caliber text, a laser printer is the only way to go. A laser's two greatest assets are speed and finesse; inexpensive, long-lasting consumables are simply a bonus.

An entry-level laser printer still costs about $400 but now delivers 600-dpi instead of 300-dpi resolution and prints at six ppm instead of four. Of course, there are fluctuations; Hewlett-Packard's LaserJet 5L cruises at four ppm while NEC's SuperScript 860 cranks out eight ppm.

Be aware, however, that a printer's speed may depend on the speed of your PC. To save costs, many budget-priced lasers eschew built-in processors, relying instead on your PC to compose pages. Thus, a slow PC may prevent a printer from reaching its peak performance. Additionally, not all 600-dpi lasers are cut from the same cloth. Features such as resolution- and memory-enhancement enable certain models to produce sharper text and bigger, smoother graphics. Check print samples, too, before buying a laser that boasts "600-dpi-class" output, which only approximates the real thing.

If desktop space is at a premium, you may want to check out the latest line of Lilliputian lasers. Lexmark's Optra E and Texas Instruments' microLaser WIN/4, for example, are downright diminutive and perfect for cramped home offices. NEC's bulky SuperScript 860, on the other hand, may require you to rearrange some furniture.

When you step up from the entry level, you'll find lasers with more memory, greater paper capacity, and PostScript compatibility. Lexmark's Optra R series churns out an amazing 16 ppm at a camera-ready resolution of 1,200 dpi and offers the networking options common to business-class printers. Color lasers, which may one day make inkjets obsolete, are now affordable for office environments, but still start around $4,000.

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The Best of the Rest

So-called specialty printers fill a number of niches. Need a printer you can take with you? Pint-size portables from Pentax and Citizen will fit in your briefcase; Citizen's portable also prints in color. Need to print multipart forms? Dot-matrix printers survive only for that purpose, although HP's DeskJet 682C drives another nail into the dot-matrix coffin by supporting form-feed paper, thus allowing banner printing.

Fargo's FotoFun is a small, high-quality color printer designed expressly for printing photos. At $499, it's not cheap, but its 4x6-inch glossies are comparable to those you get from the drugstore. With the FotoFun and a scanner or digital camera, you can turn your office into a photo-processing studio. Its dye-sublimation technology is related to the professional graphics-shop design of full-page printers from Tektronix, Digital Equipment Corp., and Fargo.

Fargo FotoFun

Many manufacturers bundle printers with intelligent drivers, family graphics or greeting-card makers, or other software.

A model that's tough to categorize, but easy to like, is Citizen's $599 Printiva 600C, a unique ribbon-based color printer that delivers photorealistic output at 600 dpi. Unlike most inkjets and dye-sub printers, the Printiva also manages to produce exceptionally crisp text with almost smearproof and waterproof output.

The Fine Print

Buying a printer has become a no-lose proposition: By deciding which features—speed, price, color, and so on—are most important to you, you'll instantly narrow the field to a few suitable models. And because printer technology has improved so dramatically over the years, you're bound to pick a winner.

Shopping Tips

If you're buying a color inkjet printer but plan to produce plenty of text documents, look for a dual- instead of single-cartridge inkjet design. Although such a printer is slightly more expensive, you'll make up the extra dollars by not having to continually replenish costly color cartridges, or at least win in convenience by not having to swap color and black cartridges for different print jobs.

There's no practical difference between printers that use genuine laser engines and those that use LED (light-emitting diode) technology. The latter are often billed as "laser" printers anyway.

If you operate a small business and can see your work expanding in the next year or so, make sure your printer comes with a network adapter or can be upgraded to include one. If you must print multipart forms with carbons, you're one of the last surviving customers for a dot-matrix impact printer.

Paper-handling can be important for both inkjet and laser printers. The former yield sharper results and more vivid color with specially coated stock as opposed to plain paper, while the latter often combine main paper bins (look for capacity of at least 100 sheets) with handy auxiliary trays for envelopes or letterhead. The straighter the paper path, the less risk of jamming.

Pay particular attention to the software drivers supplied with any printer. Many home inkjets come bundled with greeting-card, poster, or other artistic programs for family fun, while some printers are optimized for Windows but don't work with other operating systems (a software issue that's separate from the different printer-cable connector hardware used by PC and Mac printers).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

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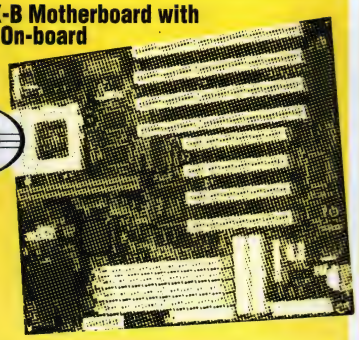

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COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	PRINTER TYPE	RESOLUTION (DPI)	PRINT SPEED	INTERFACES	DIMENSIONS (HWD, IN.)
Apple Computer	Color StyleWriter 1500	$289	C, IJ	360x360	0.3/3	S	6.9x13.7x8.5
Apple Computer	Color StyleWriter 2500	$389	C, IJ	720x360	0.7/5	S	8.3x14.4x9.2
Apple Computer	Color StyleWriter 2200	$419	C, IJ	360x360	0.3/5	S	2.2x11.8x6.2
Apple Computer	Color StyleWriter 2400	$429	C, IJ	360x360	0.3/5	S (L)	8.3x14.4x8.4
Apple Computer	Personal LaserWriter 300	$652	M, LA	300x300	NA/4	S	6.3x15.2x14.9
Apple Computer	LaserWriter 4/600 PS	$929	M, LA	600x600	NA/4	L	6.3x15.2x14.9
Apple Computer	LaserWriter Select 360	$1,339	M, LA	600x600	NA/10	P, S, L	8x15x18.3
Apple Computer	LaserWriter 12/640 PS	$1,689	M, LA	600x600	NA/12	L, P, E	9.25x15.9x16.6
Atlantic Technologies	SlimWriter 2000	$245	M, FU	360x360	NA/2	P (S)	12x8.5x1
Brother International	HL-700	$349	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P (S)	*
Brother International	HL-720	$350	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P	9.8x14.4x13.9
Brother International	HL-730	$399	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P, S	9.8x14.4x13.9
Brother International	HL-730DX	$429	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P, S	9.8x14.4x13.9
Brother International	MFC-6550 [MFP]	$2,000	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P (S)	15.1x17.8x9.9
Canon Computer Systems	BJC-240	$179	C, IJ	360x360	0.3/4	P	6.8x14.2x8.5
Canon Computer Systems	BJC-4200	$279	C, IJ	720x360	1/5	P	7.5x15.1x11.5
Canon Computer Systems	LBP-465	$379	M, LA	600x600	NA/4	P	9.8x13.2x12.6
Canon Computer Systems	BJC-70	$399	C, IJ	360x360 (C); 720x360 (M)	0.8/3	P	2.2x11.8x6.2
Canon Computer Systems	BJC-620	$399	C, IJ	720x720	1.7/3	P	7.2x16.1x10
Canon Computer Systems	BJC-4550	$499	C, IJ	720x360	1/5	P, S	8.5x17.6x10
Canon Computer Systems	MultiPass 800 [MFP]	$499	M, IJ	360x360	NA/2	P	17.4x11.9x12.9
Canon Computer Systems	MultiPass C2500 [MFP]	$599	C, IJ	720x360	0.8/5	P	15.1x19x14
Citizen America	PN60 Portable Printer	$399	C, FU	360x360	*/2	P, S	2x10x1.9
Digital Equipment Corp.	LN14P-CA	$1,999	M, LA	600x600	NA/12	P	10.5x14.4x16
Epson America	Stylus Color 500	$289	C, IJ	720x720	1/4	P, S	7.8x17x9.8
Epson America	Stylus Color IIs	$449	C, IJ	360x360	0.3/2.5	P	5.7x15.6x8.1
Epson America	Stylus Color II	$649	C, IJ	720x720	1/4	P, S	7.8x17x9.8
Epson America	ActionLaser 1100	$649	M, LA	300x300	NA/4	P	10.5x13x10
Epson America	ActionLaser 1400	$849	M, LA	600x600	NA/4	P	10.5x13x10.5
Epson America	Stylus Pro	$999	C, IJ	720x720	1/4	P, S (E, L, A, CX/TX)	7.2x20.9x19
Fargo Electronics	FotoFunl	$600	C, DS	300x300	0.5/2	P, S	4.2x9.6x7.5
Fargo Electronics	PrimeraPro	$1,895	C, TW/DS	600x300	0.6/2	P, S	5.8x13.8x10.2
Fujifilm	Print-It	$700	C, AC	480x728	0.5/NA	P, V	3x10x12
GCC Technologies	Elite 600et	$1,299	M, LA	600x600	NA/10	P, S, A, SCSI, E	10x13.9x15.5
Hewlett-Packard	DeskJet 400	$199	C, IJ	600x300	0.1/3	S	7x13.7x6.4
Hewlett-Packard	DeskWriter 600	$290	C, IJ	600x300	1/4	S, L, A	7.9x17.2x16
Hewlett-Packard	DeskWriter/DeskJet 680C	$309	C, IJ	600x300	1.5/5	P, S	7.9x17.2x16
Hewlett-Packard	DeskWriter/DeskJet 682C	$329	C, IJ	600x300	1.5/5	P, S	7.9x17.2x16
Hewlett-Packard	DeskJet 340	$365	M, IJ	600x300	NA/3	S	5.9x12.2x3.7
Hewlett-Packard	LaserJet 5L	$479	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P	8.9x13.2x12.3
Hewlett-Packard	DeskJet 850C	$658	C, IJ	600x600	2/6	P, A	8.9x17.5x15.6
Hewlett-Packard	DeskJet 855C	$663	C, IJ	600x600	3/7	P, A	8.9x17.5x15.6
Hewlett-Packard	OfficeJet 300 [MFP]	$675	M, IJ	600x300	NA/3	P	11.1x17.3x15.5
Hewlett-Packard	OfficeJet 330 [MFP]	$715	M, IJ	600x300	NA/3	P	11.1x17.3x15.5
Hewlett-Packard	OfficeJet 350 [MFP]	$725	M, IJ	600x300	NA/3	P	11.1x17.3x15.5
Hewlett-Packard	OfficeJet [MFP]	$750	M, IJ	600x300	NA/3	P	11.1x17.3x15.5
Hewlett-Packard	DeskJet 1600C	$1,699	C, IJ	300x300 (C); 600x600 (M)	4/9	P (T, E, L, A)	11x20x17
Hewlett-Packard	LaserJet 4 Plus	$1,839	M, LA	600x600	NA/12	P, S (T, E, L, A)	11.7x16.6x15.9
IBM Printing Systems	Network Printer 12	$1,599	M, LA	600x600	NA/12	P (CX, TX, E, T)	*
IBM Printing Systems	Network Printer 17	$1,999	M, LA	600x600	NA/17	P (CX, TX, E, T)	*
Kyocera Electronics	Ecosys FS-400A	$695	M, LED	300x300	NA/4	P, S, L (T, E, A)	6.7x13.9x13.8
Kyocera Electronics	Ecosys FS-1550A+	$1,545	M, LED	300x300	NA/10	P, S, L (T, E, A)	9.7x13.6x13.8
Kyocera Electronics	Ecosys FS-1600A+	$1,745	M, LED	600x600	NA/10	P, S, L (T, E, A)	9.7x13.6x13.8
Lanier	1110 MFD [MFP]	$1,995	M, LA	300x300	NA/4	S	12.4x14.5x16.7
Lexmark International	WinWriter 150C	$229	C, IJ	600x300	0.5/3	P, S	11.7x17.2x10.6

Note: Interfaces in parentheses are extra-cost options. "Print Speed" is denoted as color/mono max. speed, in pages per minute. **A** = AppleTalk; **AC** = thermo-autochrome; **C** = color; **CX** = coax; **DS** = dye sublimation; **E** = Ethernet; **FU** = thermal fusion; **IJ** = inkjet; **L** = LocalTalk; **LA** = laser; **LED** = LED printer; **M** = monochrome; **MFP** = multifunction printer; **NA** = not applicable; **P** = parallel; **ppm** = pages per minute; **S** = serial; **T** = Token Ring; **TW** = thermal wax transfer; **TX** = twinax; **V** = video; **+** = more; ***** = info. not provided

(continued on page 160)

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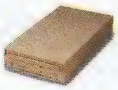

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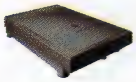

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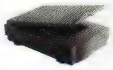

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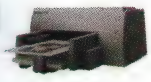

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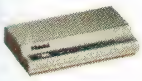

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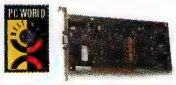

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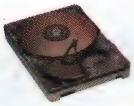

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Lexmark International	Colorjet Printer 2050	$299	C, IJ	600x600	2/5	P	11.7x17x10.6
Lexmark International	Color Jetprinter 2070	$549	C, IJ	600x600	1/7	P	11.7x17.2x11
Lexmark International	Optra E	$699	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P	8.6x13.7x9.7
Lexmark International	Optra Ep	$949	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P	8.6x13.7x9.7
Lexmark International	4039 10 plus	$1,249	M, LA	600x600	NA/10	P, S (T, E, L, A)	11.8x14.9x21
Lexmark International	Optra R +	$1,549	M, LA	1,200x1,200	NA/16	P, S (T, E, L, A)	13.1x16.1x21.1
Lexmark International	Optra Rt +	$1,849	M, LA	1,200x1,200	NA/16	P, S (T, E, L, A)	16.3x16.1x21.1
Lexmark International	Optra Rn +	$1,849	M, LA	1,200x1,200	NA/16	P, S (E)	13.1x16.1x21.1
Mannesman Tally	T9012	$1,499	M, LA	600x600	NA/12	P, S	11.4x15.8x14.8
Mannesman Tally	T7070	$1,699	C, IJ	720x360	0.8/*	P, S	7.7x27.6x14.3
NEC Technologies	SuperScript 100c	$159	C, IJ	300x300 (C), 300x600 (M)	3/*	P	7.9x14.2x14.8
NEC Technologies	SuperScript 660	$399	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P	11.9x14.6x17
NEC Technologies	SuperScript 860	$499	M, LA	600 x600	NA/8	P	9.1x14.6x16.9
Okidata	OkiPage 4w	$299	M, LED	600x300	NA/4	P	5.9x12.2x7.5
Okidata	OkiJet 2010	$369	C, IJ	600x300	0.5/3	P	11.7x17.2x10.6
Okidata	OL600e	$499	M, LED	300x1,200	NA/6	P	6.3x12.6x14.2
Okidata	OL610e	$679	M, LED	300x1,200	NA/6	P	6.3x12.6x14.2
Okidata	OL810e	$999	M, LED	600x1,200	NA/8	P, S	7.9x12.8x14.6
Okidata	OL1200	$1,499	M, LED	600x600	NA/12	P, S (T, E)	10.6x14.4x16.9
Olivetti Office USA	JP360	$349	C, IJ	300x300	3/3	P, S	11x14.2x14.2
Panasonic	KX-P6100	$399	M, LA	300x1,200	NA/6	P	11.3x5.2x14.9
Panasonic	KX-P6500	$549	M, LA	600x2,400	NA/6	P	11.3x5.2x14.9
Panasonic	KX-P8475	$699	C, LA	600x600	5/14	P	17.9x19.3x19.4
Panasonic	KX-PS600 [MFP]	$699	M, LA	600x600	NA/6	P	11.3x7.4x15.7
Pentax Technologies	PocketJet (Letter)	$449	M, FU	300x300	NA/3	P (S)	1.2x10x2.2
Ricoh	MV74 [MFP]	$1,295	C, IJ	360x360	1/4	P	9.8x15.2x13.7
Samsung Electronics	QL85G	$399	M, LA	600x600	NA/8	P	6.8x14.2x13.6
Samsung Electronics	QL85	$599	M, LA	600x600	NA/8	P, S	6.8x14.2x13.6
Tektronix	Phaser 140	$1,495	C, IJ	360x360	1/2	P, L (E)	7.5x15.5x12.2
Texas Instruments	microLaser Win/4	$379	M, LA	600x600	NA/4	P	8x12x11
Toshiba America	TF601 [MFP]	$1,799	M, LA	300x300	NA/4	P, S	15.4x16.2x9.1
Xerox	Doc. WorkCenter 250 [MFP]	$599	M, IJ	300x300	NA/3	P, S	15x16x18
Xerox	4505	$865	M, LA	600x600	NA/5	P, S (T, E, L, A)	12.1x14.5x16.2
Xerox	4510	$1,340	M, LA	600x600	NA/10	P, S (T, E, L, A)	12.1x14.5x16.2
Xerox	4520	$2,925	M, LA	600x600	NA/20	P, S (T, E, L, A)	20.8x20.5x16.6

Note: Interfaces in parentheses are extra-cost options. "Print Speed" is denoted as color/mono max. speed, in pages per minute. **A** = AppleTalk; **AC** = thermo-autochrome; **C** = color; **CX** = coax; **DS** = dye sublimation; **E** = Ethernet; **FU** = thermal fusion; **IJ** = inkjet; **L** = LocalTalk; **LA** = laser; **LED** = LED printer; **M** = monochrome; **MFP** = multifunction printer; **NA** = not applicable; **P** = parallel; **ppm** = pages per minute; **S** = serial; **T** = Token Ring; **TW** = thermal wax transfer; **TX** = twinax; **V** = video; **+** = more; ***** = info. not provided

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Video Graphics	PCI Local Bus	PCI Local Bus	Matrox MGA Millennium
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Ports: Serial/Parallel	1/1 (ECP)	1/1 (ECP)	1/1 (ECP)
Security Features	Yes	Yes	Yes
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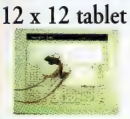

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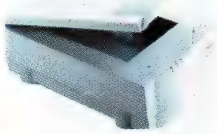

◆ 24 bit scanner with 33 bit equivalent color through analog gamma correction ◆ Long-life cold cathode lamp ◆ Enclosed optics for dust free images ◆ 1200 x 600 dpi optical resolution; to 9600 dpi interpolated ◆ Includes Photoshop LE and Page Manager OCR

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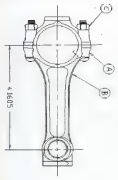

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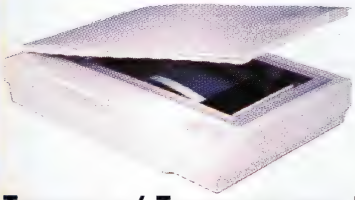

◆ 30-bit color captures over one billion colors
◆ 1200 x 300 dpi optical, to 2400 dpi max
◆ 8.5" x 14" bed size
◆ Photoshop LE and Textbridge OCR

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◆ Includes Photoshop LE & Textbridge OCR

Relisys 9630T — $599

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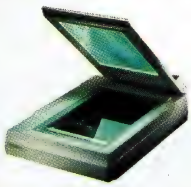
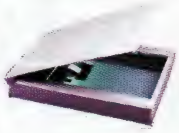


◆ **2400 x 600 dpi optical resolution**, to 9600 dpi max
◆ 30-bit single pass scanner captures over 1 Billion colors
◆ 8.3" x 11.7" scanning area; long-life cold-cathode lamp
◆ Transparency adapter - 8.3" x 11.7" area – $499 value!
◆ Adobe PhotoShop LE and Textbridge OCR

Relisys 9630T w/ Full Photoshop, Textbridge OCR — $799

AVEC Colour 2400 — $199

Price breakthrough for color flatbed scanner!



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◆ 1200x300 dpi optical , 2400 dpi maximum
◆ PhotoShop LE and Textbridge OCR
◆ **Transparency adapter included!**

Relisys 9624T — $399

Amazing 2400 x 600 dpi optical resolution!

◆ 24-bit single pass color scanner captures 16.7 million colors! ◆ 2400 x 600 dpi optical resolution, to 9600 dpi interpolated ◆ 8.3" x 11.7" scanning area
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If you're looking for a fast and easy way to convert pages of text or images into usable computer data, a scanner is your best bet. Prices of high-quality, 24-bit color scanners have plummeted dramatically this year, putting full-featured $400-to-$500 image grabbers from Microtek, Hewlett-Packard, Umax, and others within the budget of nearly every Windows or Mac user. For even less money, you'll find handheld and personal scanners suitable for capturing letter-size documents or small photographs.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

Whether you want to add graphics to a Web page, convert piles of paper documents to editable text, digitize images and photos, send faxes, or spiff up publications, shopping for a scanner isn't difficult. The three main steps are deciding whether to pick a flatbed, sheet-fed, or handheld scanner in a color or gray-scale configuration; choosing a resolution (sharpness) and color palette appropriate for your intended applications; and checking out a scanner's bundled software.

A few other factors, such as scanning speed and the size of the scanning bed, are less important for the average user. Nor do you need to worry about compatibility with your PC's operating system; the same models are usually available for both Windows and Mac platforms.

Scanning the PC Market

All scanners basically operate the same way: A light source inside the unit illuminates a document or photograph. The reflected light is then read by a charged-coupled device (CCD), similar to that inside a camcorder, which converts different levels of intensity into digital signals representing light and dark areas.

The type of work you do will determine whether you'll

BY DAVID D. BUSCH

be happiest with a handheld, sheet-fed, or flatbed scanner. Handhelds, priced from $100 to $200 and up, are compact and transportable but are best suited for small originals—text columns or clip-art images only 4- to 5-inches wide—although their bundled software usually lets you stitch multiple passes together to create a single image.

Umax BizCard Reader

Mustek's Plug-and-Scan Color, for example, is a 24-bit color handheld that connects through a laptop's PC Card slot and requires no external power source. The IRISPen (also sold as the Storm Primax DataPen), meanwhile, is about the size of a slim remote control and works like a highlighter pen, capturing one line of text at a time, at 100 characters per second.

Sheet-fed or personal scanners reside in the $200 to $350 price range and are directed at users who want to convert stacks of pages to text using optical character recognition (OCR) software or who want to store, index, and search digitized images of faxes, articles, and letters as part of a document-management system.

These compact scanners, which can nestle into the desk space between your keyboard and PC or monitor, also work well as an input source for faxing hard-copy originals. Also included in this group are snapshot and business-card scanners, such as Umax's BizCard Reader and Storm Primax's Easy Photo Reader.

Many sheet-fed scanners, such as HP's ScanJet 4s and Visioneer's PaperPort Vx (the latter also available integrated into a keyboard as the PaperPort ix), grab only grayscale or monochrome images. Others, including Logitech's PageScan Color Pro and Plustek's Spectra 1200, offer full 24-bit color capabilities. These scanners handle only single sheets, however, so you can't capture images from books or bulky originals. Personal scanners usually connect through a PC's parallel printer port, so they are especially easy to set up. Macintosh versions may use a modem or printer port as an alternative to a SCSI connection.

Flatbed scanners have captured the lion's share of the market because of their flexibility. These desktop devices,

(continued on page 179)

SCANNERS

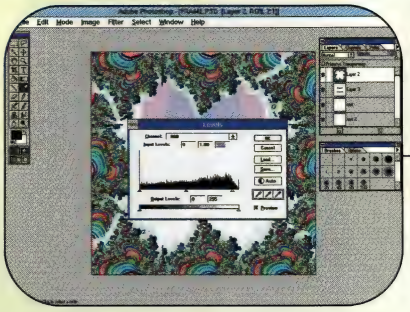
The Soft Side of Scanners

The unbundled price of the software included with a scanner can often approach that of the scanner itself. Some scanners in the $1,000 range, including models available from Umax and Sharp, are bundled with full versions of Adobe Photoshop, an $895-list image editor. You might also find a Mac or PC version of an optical character recognition (OCR) program, such as Caere Corp.'s WordScan or OmniPage Lite; a fax package; or a document-management program in the box.

These software riches sometimes come with a hidden price, however. You may receive an older or "lite" version of a program, along with an offer to upgrade to the newer, full version for $50 to $100, which really isn't a bad deal considering the prices of some of the full-blown software packages.

Serious image editors will need a program like Ulead's ImagePlus or Frontier Technologies' Color-It (two other frequently bundled packages, for the PC and Macintosh, respectively), or Adobe Photoshop. Any of these software packages can serve as a springboard for acquiring images through a TWAIN-compatible plug-in. (TWAIN is a standard that allows you to scan or import data from any compatible Windows application.) Images can be sharpened, resized, converted to a different file format, stitched together, or combined with other images in an editor.

OCR programs recognize the pixel-patterns and other characteristics of text images, and convert them to ASCII or your favorite word processor format for printout or additional editing. If nontextual information in a document, such as signatures, drawings, or photographs, is important, a document-management package, such as the PaperPort software furnished with the Visioneer PaperPort Vx and HP ScanJet 4s, can tame these images with built-in compression, indexing, and filing capabilities. If you're dissatisfied with your vendor's choice in OCR software, you can always invest in a commercial product. Xerox's TextBridge Pro 96 is a good choice on the Windows 95 platform.


Adobe Photoshop

Fax packages let you scan hard-copy originals and then transmit them, while managing your fax phone books and incoming faxes. Although many scanners ship with so-called lite versions of fax software, Symantec/Delrina's WinFax Pro or CFax's CFax Pro 4.0 are popular upgrade choices in this area.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK BECKER

Envisions Solutions Technology

800/365-SCAN

scanners

Magazine photo scanned on the Umax Gemini @ 800dpi, vs.

same photo scanned on the HP ScanJet 4c @ 600dpi...

the Nikon AX-1200 @ its max resolution of 565dpi...

& the Epson 1200c @ 600dpi

Umax Gemini

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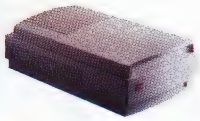


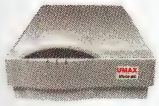
	Maximum optical resolution	Maximum enhanced resolution	Scanning time (seconds)	Single-pass scanning engine	Cold-cathode light source	Automatic descreening & color adj.	Document Management Software	Toll-free technical support	Price with transparency adapter
✔ Umax Gemini	800	9600	38.8	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	$999
☐ HP ScanJet 4c	600	2400	77.7	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘	$1558
☐ Nikon AX-1200	565	2400	86.3	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	$1588
☐ Epson 1200c	600	4800	93.4	✘	✘	✘	✘	✔	$1658

Umax Vista S6

Scans images in 24-bit color at up to 4800dpi enhanced, 300 x 600dpi optical resolution. Comes with easy-to-use Adobe PhotoDeluxe and Presto! PageManager for filing, faxing, and copying scanned pages. Recommended by *FamilyPC*, which calls the Vista S6 "a quality device with professional features and a nice assortment of software." Reg. $279, now $259 with mail-in rebate from Umax!

Umax Vista S6 w/ PhotoDeluxe **$259**
Umax Vista S6 w/ Full Photoshop **$458**

- 300 x 600 dpi
- 24-bit / 16 million colors
- Adobe PhotoDeluxe & PageManager



	Maximum optical resolution	Maximum enhanced resolution	Scanning time (minutes)	Single-pass scanning engine	Cold-cathode light source	Automatic descreening & color adj.	Document Management Software	Toll-free technical support	Price with full suite of software
✔ Umax Vista S6	300	4800	0:55	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	$259
☐ Microtek E3	300	2400	1:07	✔	✔	✘	✔	✘	$349
☐ Epson AS-2	300	2400	2:24	✘	✘	✘	✘	✔	$403
☐ HP ScanJet 4p	300	1200	0:56	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘	$499

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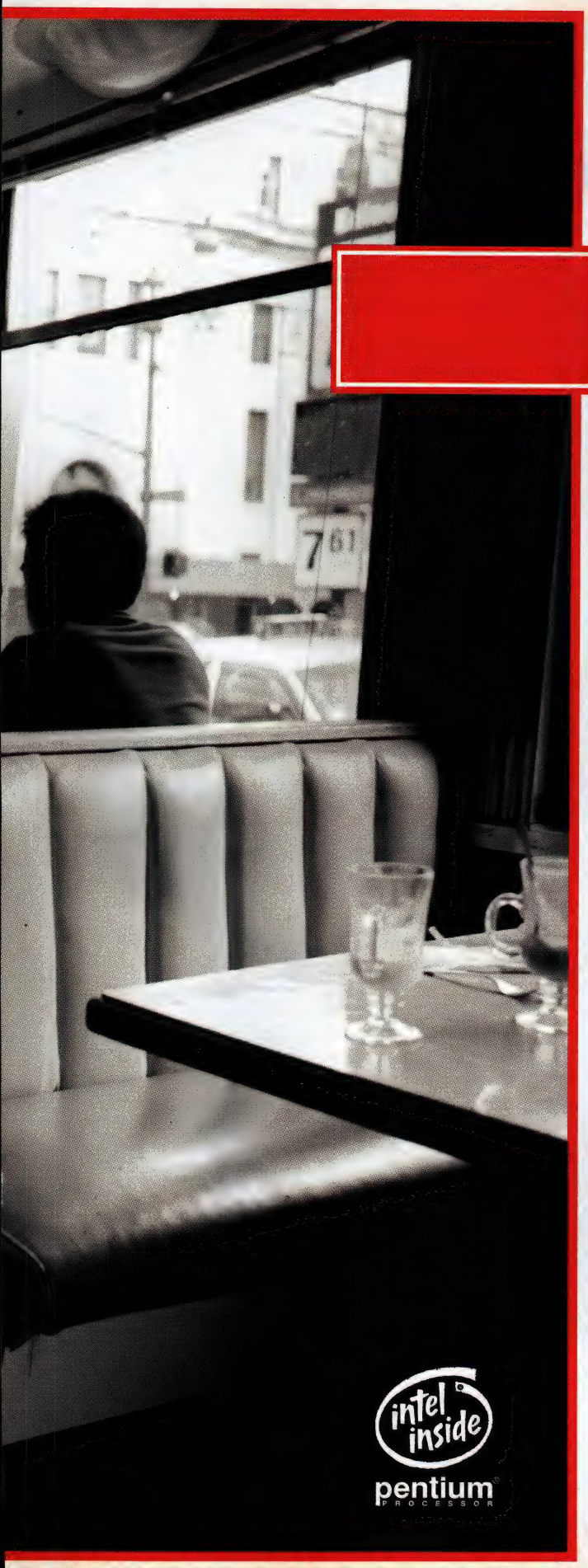

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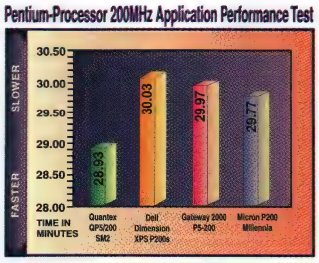

**Based on the combined test times of the following applications: Word 7.0, Excel 7.0, Picture Publisher 6.0, Paradox 5.0, WordPerfect 6.1 and 1-2-3 release 5. Tests conducted by PC World, July, 1996 issue.*

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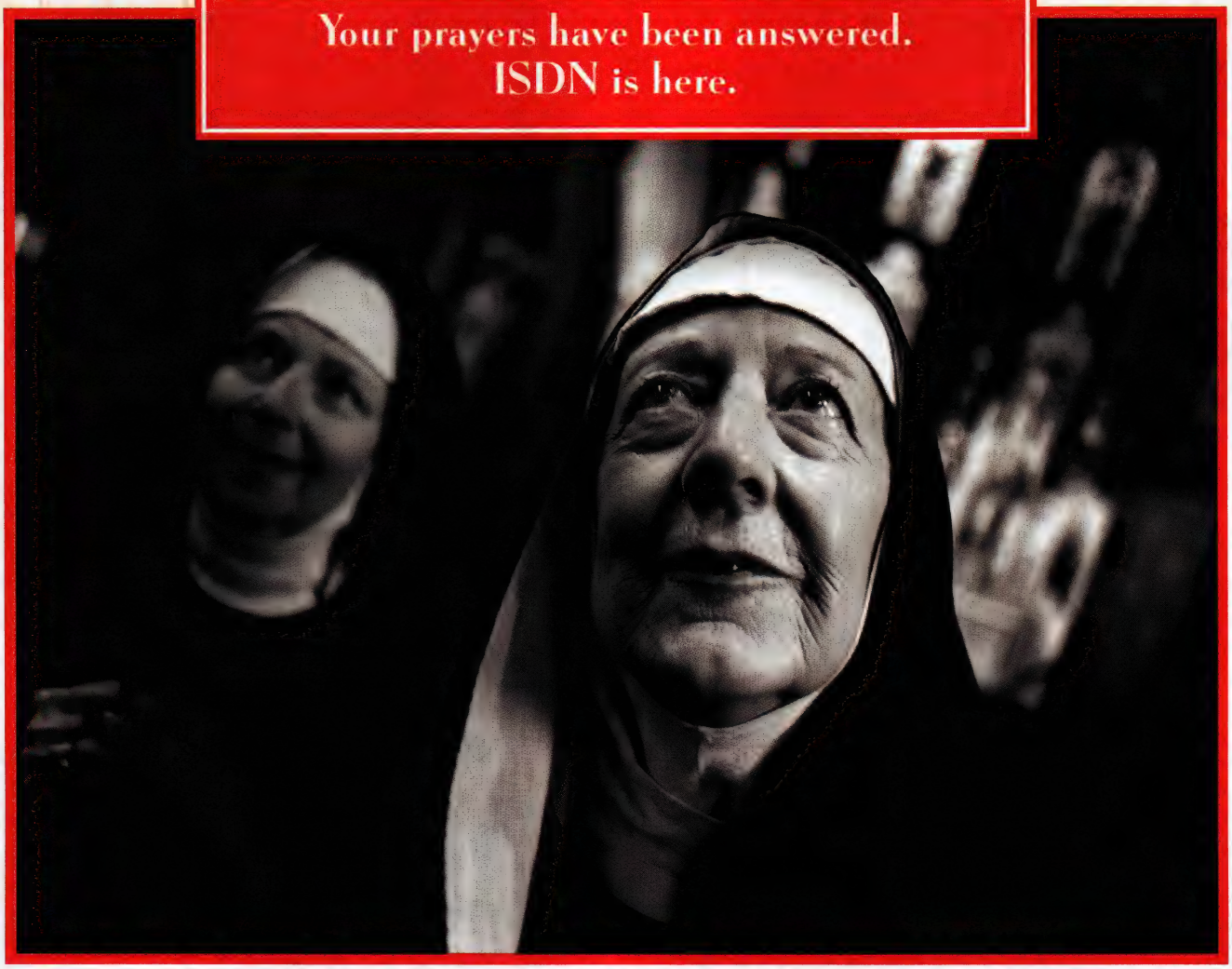

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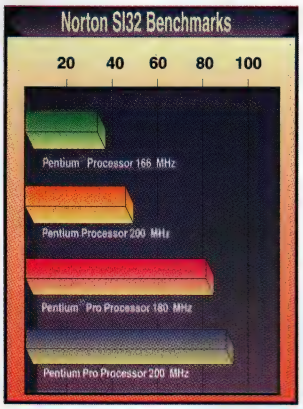

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- Motorola ISDN Terminal Adapter
- Toshiba 8X 135ms EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Ensoniq VIVO-90 32-Bit Wavetable Synthesizer
- Altec Lansing ACS-400 Surround Sound Speakers w/ACS-250 Subwoofer
- ATX Tower Case
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- Corel: WordPerfect Suite / Internet Mania / Print House
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(continued from page 168)

priced anywhere from $400 to $2,000, scan anything that will fit on their glass platens—including color transparencies when used with an optional adapter and light source or a sensor optimized for slide scanning (about $300 to $700 extra). High-volume OCR users can also outfit a flatbed with an automatic document feeder ($400 and up). If you need to scan legal-size originals, look for a model with an 8.5x14-inch scanning bed.

Installing a flatbed scanner usually means opening your PC's case and plugging a SCSI or proprietary interface card into a free slot. Make sure compatible drivers, especially 32-bit Windows 95 support and a TWAIN driver that lets you import images directly into applications, are available before you buy.

Visioneer PaperPort

Color scanners are so inexpensive these days that grayscale flatbed scanners have virtually disappeared. Color models can even improve the quality of originals destined for black-and-white reproduction. For example, some new scanners let you select the color used to scan an image to drop out a stain or other artifact, or let you tweak a color photo extensively before converting it to grayscale.

The Right Resolution

OCR jobs and color or grayscale photos rarely need to be scanned at resolutions higher than 300 dots per inch (dpi), unless graphics output will go to a high-resolution image setter or will be greatly enlarged. In fact, the halftone process puts more of a limitation on the apparent sharpness of the image than on the original scan's resolution.

Line art, engravings, and very small originals (notably color transparencies) benefit from higher resolutions. If you plan to scan postage stamps, 35mm slides, or reproduce small sections of photographs, consider a 600x1,200-dpi scanner. Most other users will be happy with 300x300-dpi to 600x600-dpi models.

The above figures, it's important to note, are true or optical resolutions. Scanner vendors love to advertise, and scanner owners can occasionally make good use of, interpolated resolutions—scans that use software algorithms to add interpolated pixels between actual ones, simulating resolutions as high as 9,600 dpi.

A Bit of Color

For most scanner users, as for today's graphics cards and image-editing programs, 24-bit color—a palette of 16.7 million hues—is a practical maximum. Some color scanners, however, offer 30-bit (1 billion colors) and even 36-bit (68 billion colors) depth.

In practice, all scanners lose some information when converting an image to digital format, so a 30- or 36-bit scanner has many more colors to choose from to produce an optimized 16.7-million-color palette for your final image. Ultra-high-color scanners also use their extra sensitivity to pull fine gradations of detail out of inky shadows, while retaining the information found in bright highlighted areas. This added dynamic range comes in handy when scanning transparencies, which can contain more information in light and dark regions than color prints.

If you plan to scan slides or need the extra color accuracy, you may want to consider a 30-bit or higher scanner, which can be purchased for $700 and up. Nikon and other vendors also offer specialized slide scanners that work exclusively with transparencies; most cost from $800 to $2,000 or more, restricting their appeal to graphics shops or businesses that scan stacks of slides on a daily basis.

Section Continues on Page 182

Shopping Tips

If speed is important to you, buy a color scanner that uses a one-pass rather than a three-pass scanning method.

If the scanner uses a standard SCSI interface, make sure the vendor includes an ASPI driver so you can connect the scanner to any SCSI interface card that may already be installed in your PC.

When comparing scanners, go by true or optical resolution—the number of vertical and horizontal samples per inch—rather than a higher, software-interpolated resolution.

Although most scanners ship with drivers for Windows 3.x, Windows 95 users should make sure 32-bit drivers are available.

If you're buying a scanner to perform OCR or document-management chores, don't get any software until after you've purchased the device. Most scanners come bundled with usable "lite" or even complete versions of these applications.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE GREENBERG

Zenith Data Systems Direct...

professional

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- Infrared IrDA Port
- 256K Synchronous Pipelined Burst Cache
- 128-bit graphics accelerator with 1MB Memory
- 16-bit sound
- Built-in Microphone and Stereo Speakers
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- Microsoft® Windows® 95
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- Telephone Answering Device & Speakerphone
- 6-bit SRS 3D Wavetable Audio
- Altec Lansing Stereo Speakers
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- Corel WordPerfect Suite 7
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- Microsoft® Windows® NT
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- 17" (15.5" Viewable) .28 Pitch Monitor
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- 3 Year Limited Warranty

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Agfa	SnapScan	$389	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Agfa	StudioScan II Si	$775	FL/C	8.5x14	400x800/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF, (O)TA
Apple Computer	Color One Scanner 600/27	$599	FL/C	8.5x11.9	300x600/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Apple Computer	Color One Scanner 1200/30	$849	FL/C	8.5x11.9	600x1,200/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Avision Labs	AV-100P	$199	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	300x600/NA	P, SCSI	ADF
Avision Labs	AV-100C	$299	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/NA	P	ADF
Avision Labs	AV-6240	$599	FL/C	8.5x14	600x1,200/9,600	PCC, SCSI	(O)TA
Avision Labs	AV-800C	$1,345	FL/C	8.5x14	300x600/NA	PCC, SCSI	ADF, (O)TA
Brother International	ImageCenter 150 OCR	$399	PE/GS	8.1 (wide)	200x200/400x400	P	ADF
Canon Computer Systems	Scan-o-Rama	$299	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/600x600	P	ADF
Canon Computer Systems	CanoScan 300	$449	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/1,200	SCSI	(O)ADF
Canon Computer Systems	CanoScan 600	$899	FL/C	8.5x11.7	600x1,200/2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF, (O)TA
Compaq Computer	Scanner Keyboard	$349	SK/GS	8.5 (wide)	200x400/400x400	S	None
DPI Electronic Imaging	DPi Art-Getter	$349	FL/C	8.5x14	300x600/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF, (O)TA
Eastman Kodak	Snapshot Photo Scanner	$199	PID/C	4 (wide)	400/600	P	None
Envisions Solutions Technology	4e	$349	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Envisions Solutions Technology	4cx	$699	FL/C	8.5x11.7	600x1,200/9,600x9,600	SCSI	(O)ADF
Epson America	PhotoPlus	$249	PID/C	4 (wide)	200x200/1,200x1,200	P	None
Epson America	Action Scanner II	$499	FL/C	8.5x11	300x600/2,400x2,400	P, SCSI	None
Epson America	ES-1000C	$599	FL/C	8.5x11	400x800/3,000x3,000	P, SCSI	(O)ADF
Epson America	Expression 636	$899	FL/C	8.5x11	600x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI, P	(O)ADF, (O)TA
Fujitsu Computer Products	ScanPartner Jr.	$399	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	300x300/NA	SCSI	ADF
Fujitsu Computer Products	ScanPartner 10c	$1,495	FL/C	8.5x11	300x300/NA	P, SCSI	ADF
Genius/Kye	Genius ColorPage SP2	$399	FL/C	8.5x13.5	300x600/600x600	SCSI	(O)ADF
Hewlett-Packard	HP ScanJet 4s	$369	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	200x400/400x400	S	None
Hewlett-Packard	HP ScanJet 4p	$615	FL/C	8.5x14	300x600/1,200x1,200	SCSI	(O)ADF
Hewlett-Packard	HP ScanJet 4c	$1,179	FL/C	8.5x14	600x1,200/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Info Peripherals	ImageReader GS	$219	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	200x400/800x800	PRO, P	None
Info Peripherals	ImageReader C113	$279	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/1,200x1,200	PRO	None
Info Peripherals	ImageReader ADF CDF13	$329	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/1,200x1,200	PRO	ADF
Info Peripherals	ImageReader Elite FB213	$349	FL/C	8.5x11.8	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	None
Info Peripherals	ImageReader ADF CDF123	$379	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/1,200x1,200	PRO	ADF
Info Peripherals	ImageReader Elite FB214	$399	FL/C	8.5x11.8	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	None
Info Peripherals	ImageReader FB FB13	$499	FL/C	8.5x14	300x1,200/2,400x2,400	SCSI	None
IRIS America	IRISPen	$299	HH/NA	0.5 (wide)	300x300/NA	P	None
IRIS America	CardIRIS	$299	BCS/GS	4 (wide)	300x300/NA	P	None
LaCie	SilverScanner Pro	$599	FL/C	8.5x11	300x600/1,200x1,200	SCSI	None
LaCie	SilverScanner DTP	$899	FL/C	8.5x11	400x800/3,200x3,200	SCSI	(O)ADF
Logitech	ScanMan Color 2000	$199	HH/C	4.1 (wide)	400x800/1,600	P	None
Logitech	PageScan Color Pro	$399	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	200x400/1,600	P	ADF
Lumina Office Products	ColorScan 3000	$299	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/2,400x2,400	P	ADF
Microtek Lab	Page Wiz	$129	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	300x300/NA	P	(O)ADF
Microtek Lab	ScanMaker E3	$399	FL/C	8.5x13.5	300x600/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Microtek Lab	ScanMaker E6 Standard	$599	FL/C	8.5x13	600x1,200/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Microtek Lab	ScanMaker E6 Pro PC	$799	FL/C	8.5x13	600x1,200/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Microtek Lab	ScanMaker 35t Plus	$799	FS/C	NA	1,950x1,950/3,900x3,900	SCSI	None
Mustek	TwainScan Color 24	$129	HH/C	4.13 (wide)	400x400/800x800	PRO	None
Mustek	Paragon Page 630	$149	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	300x300/600x600	PRO	ADF
Mustek	Color Artist Pro	$149	HH/C	4.13 (wide)	400x800/800x800	PRO	None
Mustek	Paragon Page Color	$229	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x300/1,200x1,200	PRO	ADF
Mustek	Paragon Page Color	$229	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x300/1,200x1,200	P	ADF
Mustek	Paragon 600 II SP	$299	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/4,800x4,800	P	(O)ADF
Mustek	Paragon 600 II SP	$299	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Mustek	Paragon 800 II SP	$389	FL/C	8.5x11.7	400x800/6,400x6,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Mustek	Paragon 800 SP	$399	FL/C	8.5x14	400x800/6,400x6,400	SCSI	None

ADF = automatic document feeder; **BCS** = business card scanner; **C** = color; **DUP** = duplex; **FL** = flatbed; **FS** = film scanner; **GS** = grayscale; **HH** = handheld; **NA** = not applicable; **(O)** = optional; **P** = parallel; **PCC** = PC Card; **PE** = personal sheetfed; **PID** = photo input device; **PRO** = proprietary; **S** = serial; **SK** = scanner/keyboard; **TA** = transparency adapter; **V** = video

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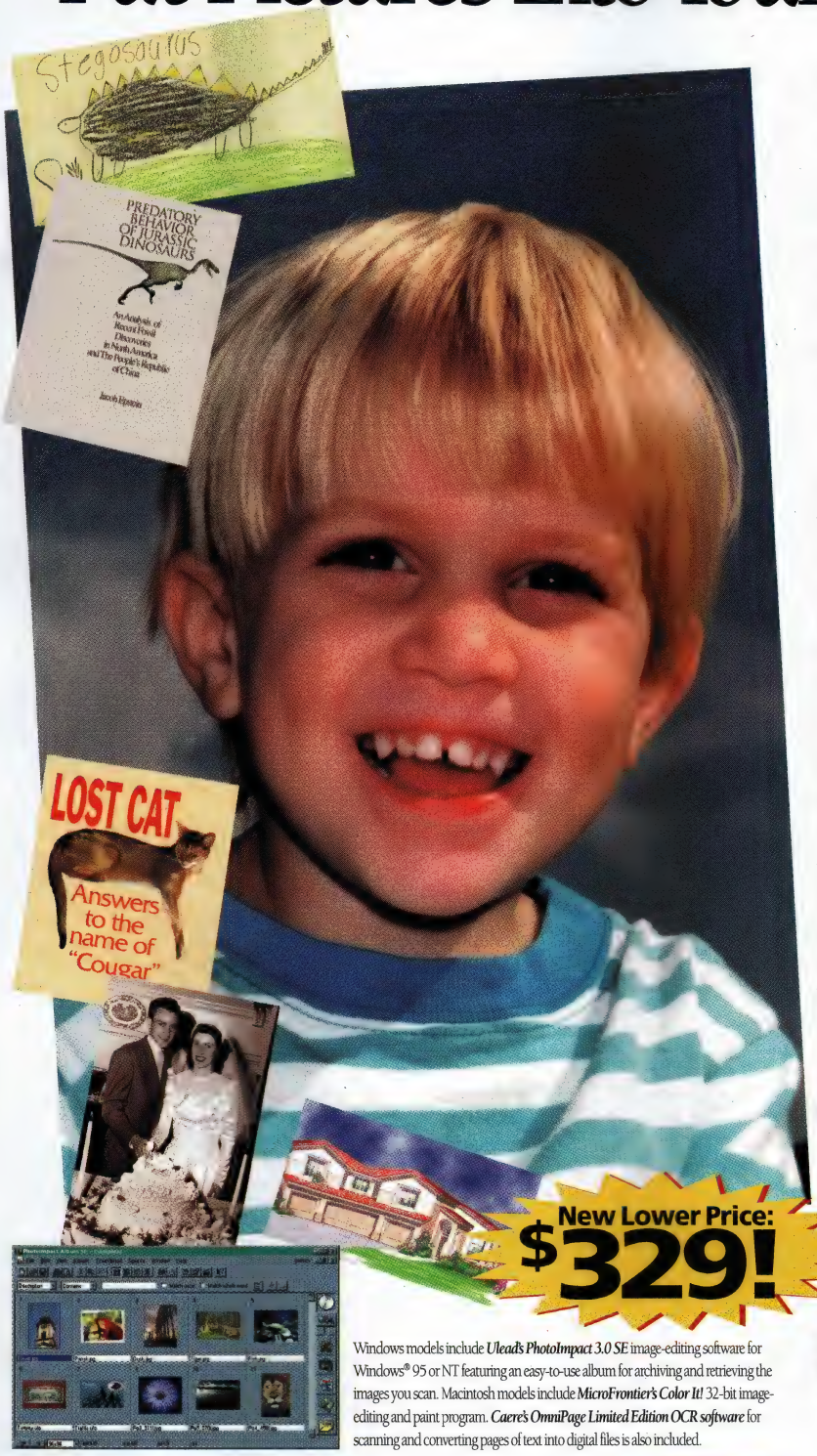

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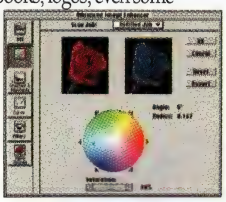

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- *Scans legal-size documents*

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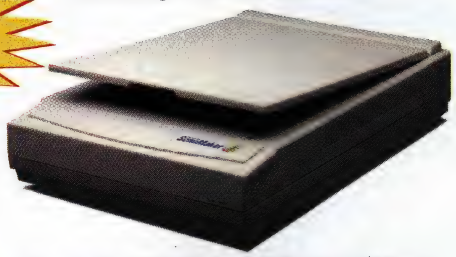

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SCANNERS

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	TYPE	SCAN AREA (IN.)	MAX. OPT./INT. RES. (DPI)	INTERFACE	EXTRAS
Mustek	Paragon 1200 SP	$499	FL/C	8.5x14	600x1,200/9,600x9,600	SCSI	None
Nikon	Scantouch 110	$695	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Nikon	Scantouch 210	$1,049	FL/C	8.5x11.7	600x1,200/9,600x9,600	SCSI	(O)ADF
Nikon	Coolscan II (internal)	$1,395	FS/C	NA	2,700/NA	SCSI	None
Nikon	Coolscan II (external)	$1,595	FS/C	NA	2,700/NA	SCSI	None
Nikon	Scantouch 1200	$1,720	FL/C	8.5x14	565x1,200/1,200x1,200	SCSI	(O)TA
Pacific Image Electronics	ScanAce	$575	FL/C	8.5x14	300x600/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Pacific Image Electronics	ScanAce II	$749	FL/C	8.5x14	600x1,200/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Pacific Image Electronics	ScanAce III	$1,095	FL/C	8.5x14	600x1,200/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Plustek	PageReader 800	$199	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	400x400/800x800	PRO	None
Plustek	PageReader 800 Portable	$249	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	400x400/800x800	P	None
Plustek	Spectra 1200	$299	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/1,200x1,200	PRO	None
Plustek	Optic Pro 4800P	$399	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/4,800x4,800	P	None
Polaroid	Sprint Scan 35/LE	$999	FS/C	NA	1,950x3,900/3,900x3,900	SCSI	None
Ricoh	IS 50	$1,300	FL/GS	8.5x14	400x400/1,600x1,600	SCSI	(O)ADF
Ricoh	IS 60	$1,300	FL/GS	8.3x14	600x600/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Ricoh	FS 2	$2,245	FL/C	8.3x14	600x1,200/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Scanpaq	PageDS	$149	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	200x200/400x400	P	None
Scanpaq	PageDS 1200	$249	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/1,200x1,200	P, SCSI	None
Scanpaq	PageDS 2000	$299	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/2,000x2,000	P	ADF
Scanpaq	SQ 2400	$349	FL/C	8.5x13.5	300x600/2,400x2,400	P, SCSI	(O)ADF
Scanpaq	SQ 4800	$499	FL/C	8.5x13	600x1,200/4,800x4,800	P, SCSI	(O)ADF
Storm Primax	EasyPhoto Reader	$199	PID/C	4 (wide)	200x600/1,200x1,200	P	None
Storm Primax	EasyPhoto Drive (Internal)	$199	PID/C	4 (wide)	200x400/1,200x1,200	PRO	None
Storm Primax	EasyPhoto SmartPage	$299	PE/C	8 (wide)	300x600/1,200x1,200	PRO	None
Tamarack Technologies	Personal Document Scanner	$199	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	300x300/600x600	P	ADF
Tamarack Technologies	Z1-600	$649	FL/C	8.5x11	300x600/2,400x2,400	SCSI	(O)ADF
Tamarack Technologies	Z1-1200	$949	FL/C	8.5x11	600x1,200/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Ultima International	Artec ViewScan Home I	$129	HH/C	4.2 (wide)	400/2,400x2,400	PRO	None
Ultima International	Artec ViewScan A2000D	$129	HH/C	4.2 (wide)	400/1,600x1,600	PRO	None
Ultima International	Artec Scanrom (external)	$349	PID/C	4 (wide)	400/4,800	P	None
Ultima International	Artec ViewStation AT3	$379	FL/C	8.5x11	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Ultima International	Artec ViewStation A6000 C+	$399	FL/C	11x14	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Umax Technologies	PageOffice Dual	$245	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	300x300/NA	SCSI	ADF
Umax Technologies	PageOffice Color	$249	PE/C	8.5 (wide)	300x600/NA	SCSI	ADF
Umax Technologies	Vista-S6E	$445	FL/C	8.5x11.7	300x600/4,800x4,800	SCSI	(O)ADF
Umax Technologies	Vista-S12	$895	FL/C	8.5x11.7	600x1,200/9,600x9,600	SCSI	(O)ADF
Umax Technologies	PowerLook II	$2,495	FL/C	8.3x11.7	600x1,200/9,600x9,600	SCSI	None
Visioneer	PaperPort Vx	$299	PE/GS	8.5 (wide)	200x400/400x400	SCSI, P, S	None
Visioneer	PaperPort ix	$349	SK/GS	8.5 (wide)	200x400/400x400	P, S	None

ADF = automatic document feeder; **BCS** = business card scanner; **C** = color; **DUP** = duplex; **FL** = flatbed; **FS** = film scanner; **GS** = grayscale; **HH** = handheld; **NA** = not applicable; **(O)** = optional; **P** = parallel; **PCC** = PC Card; **PE** = personal sheetfed; **PID** = photo input device; **PRO** = proprietary; **S** = serial; **SK** = scanner/keyboard; **TA** = transparency adapter; **V** = video

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Fujitsu Computer Products 800-626-4686
Genius-Kye 800-456-7593
Hewlett-Packard.....800-722-6538
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Logitech 800-231-7717
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Microtek Lab 800-654-4160
Mustek 800-468-7835
Nikon 800-526-4566
Pacific Image Electronics 800-909-9996
Plustek 800-685-8088
Polaroid 800-816-2611
Ricoh 800-955-3453
Scanpaq 800-335-5533
Storm Primax 800-275-5734
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125757A	6' C36M/MC36M - B/C CABLE	26.55
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Additional lengths and gender configurations available.

Additional lengths available.

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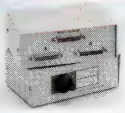

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126755A	2-1 CENT 36 SWITCH BOX	18.95
126817A	2-1 HD15 VGA SWITCH BOX	18.00
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126111A	15' DB25M TO DB25F EXT. CABLE	8.10
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126115A	50' DB25M TO DB25F EXT. CABLE	17.55

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126150A	6' DB9M TO DB9M EXT. CABLE	6.60
126147A	6' DB9F TO DB9F EXT. CABLE	6.60
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126142A	6' DB37M TO DB37F EXT. CABLE	22.75

CENTRONICS EXTENSION CABLES

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126132A	10' CENT M/F EXTENSION CABLE	9.00
126133A	15' CENT M/F EXTENSION CABLE	10.95

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126171A	10' HD15 M/F VGA MONITOR EXT.	7.55
126088A	6' HD15 M/M VGA EXT. CABLE	6.60
132904A	10' HD15 M/M VGA EXT. CABLE	7.55

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126162A	6' 5-PIN DIN M/M EXT.-STRAIGHT	3.35
126160A	6' 5-PIN DIN M/F EXT.-STRAIGHT	3.35
126163A	10' 5-PIN DIN M/M EXT.-STRAIGHT	4.15
126161A	10' 5-PIN DIN M/F EXT.-STRAIGHT	4.15

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126145A	6' 6-PIN DIN M/M EXT.-STRAIGHT	3.55
126168A	6' 6-PIN DIN M/F EXT.-STRAIGHT	3.55

KEYBOARD ADAPTERS

125928A	PS/2 ADAPT 6F TO 5M ADAPTER	4.15
125931A	6" PS/2 6F TO 5M CABLE	4.50
125929A	PS/2 ADAPT 6M TO 5F ADAPTER	4.15
125930A	6" PS/2 6M TO 5F CABLE	4.50

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AT ADAPTERS - $4.50 and UP

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126594A	6' POWER EXTENSION CORD	3.75
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126600A	1' MONITOR POWER ADAPTER	3.30
126601A	6' MONITOR POWER ADAPTER	4.25

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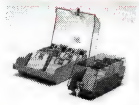

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130168A	3.5" RED DISK BOX - HOLDS 100	9.45
130165A	3.5" BLUE DISK BOX - HOLDS 50	6.60
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130166A	3.5" GREEN DISK BOX - HOLDS 50	6.60
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COLORED MOUSE PADS

128906A	GREY MOUSE PAD	4.70
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COLORED WRIST PADS

130187A	GREY WRIST PAD	6.60
130174A	RED WRIST PAD	6.60
125893A	BLUE WRIST PAD	6.60

LAPLINK STYLE CABLES

$6.15 UP

126349A	6' PARALLEL DB25M TO DB25M	6.15
126350A	6' SERIAL DB9F/DB25F (EACH END)	10.45

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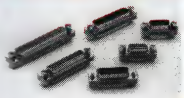
NULL MODEM CABLES

126482A	6' DB25M TO DB25F NULL MODEM	5.25
126483A	10' DB25M TO DB25F NULL MODEM	6.20
126472A	6' DB25M TO DB9F NULL MODEM	5.25
126497A	6' DB9F TO DB9F NULL MODEM	5.25

Additional lengths, gender configurations, and Adapters available.

GENDER CHANGERS



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DB-STYLE GENDER CHANGERS

126224A	DB9 M/M GENDER CHANGER	3.75
126222A	DB9 F/F GENDER CHANGER	3.75
126213A	DB25 M/M GENDER CHANGER	3.75
126209A	DB25 F/F GENDER CHANGER	3.75
126206A	DB15 M/M GENDER CHANGER	4.70
126203A	DB15 F/F GENDER CHANGER	4.70
126205A	HD15 M/M VGA GENDER CHANGER	4.70
126204A	HD15 F/F VGA GENDER CHANGER	4.70

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126214A	CENT 36 F/F GENDER CHANGER	5.65
126215A	CENT 36 M/M GENDER CHANGER	5.65
126218A	C50F TO C50F GENDER CHANGER	8.10
126219A	C50M TO C50M GENDER CHANGER	8.10

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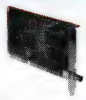
126229A	DB25 M/M MINI GENDER CHGR.	4.70
126227A	DB25 F/F MINI GENDER CHGR.	4.70
126235A	DB9 M/M MINI GENDER CHGR.	4.70
126230A	CENT 36 F/F MINI GENDER CHGR.	6.15

MINI DIN GENDER CHANGERS

126220A	8-PIN MINI DIN F/F GENDER CHGR.	11.35
126216A	4-PIN MINI DIN F/F GENDER CHGR.	8.50

NETWORKING HARDWARE



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133756A	16 BIT 10BASE2 NETWORK CARD	33.20
133755A	16 BIT 10BASET NETWORK CARD	33.20
133758A	16 BIT COMBO NETWORK CARD	37.95
133385A	RJ45 MICRO TRANSCEIVER	21.85
133386A	2/BNC MICRO TRANSCEIVER	21.85
133387A	DUAL ST TRANSCEIVER	146.30

Additional configurations and styles available.

SCSI CABLES

$5.65 UP

SCSI CABLES

125953A	1.5' SCSI CENT 50 M/M CABLE	5.65
125951A	3' SCSI CENT 50 M/M CABLE	5.95
125952A	6' SCSI CENT 50 M/M CABLE	6.90
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SCSI-2 CABLES

127012A	3.5' SCSI-2 MD50 M - CENT 50M	43.65
127013A	6' SCSI-2 MD50 M - CENT 50M	52.20
127016A	3.5' SCSI-2 MD50 M/M CABLE	37.95
127017A	6' SCSI-2 MD50 M/M CABLE	42.70

SCSI-3 CABLES

131309A	3' SCSI-3 MD68 M - CENT 50M	47.45
131310A	6' SCSI-3 MD68 M - CENT 50M	52.20
131701A	3' SCSI-3 MD68 M - MD50 M	52.20
131702A	6' SCSI-3 MD68 M - MD50 M	56.95
131307A	3' SCSI-3 MD68 M /M	61.70
131308A	6' SCSI-3 MD68 M/M	66.45

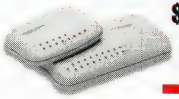
Squeeze Latch styles, Apple™ compatible SCSI cables, and other gender configurations also available.

SCSI-2 TERMINATORS

127024A	SCSI-2 PASSIVE TERMINATOR	18.35
127025A	SCSI-2 ACTIVE TERMINATOR	25.65
131510A	SCSI-2 DIFFERENTIAL TERM.	30.35
132957A	SCSI-2 ALT-2AN TERMINATOR	35.95

Other SCSI Terminators and Adapters are also available.

CATEGORY 5 HUBS



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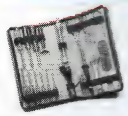

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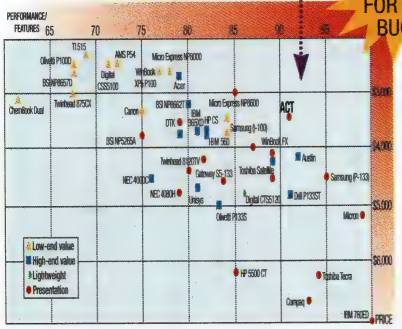

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Digital Pictures are worth A Million Pixels

Forget about film; the latest digital cameras make it a snap to put photos on your PC. BY Chris O'Malley

All 35mm cameras are not the same, so why does everyone assume that one digital camera is as good as the next? To hear some people speak, you might think digital cameras are a fairly homogeneous bunch, like flatbed scanners or laser printers. But the real picture is considerably blurrier. In fact, at this point, digital cameras are more like a collection of individuals than a cohesive group.

Dycam Digital Color Zoom 10-C, Epson PhotoPC

Digital cameras do share some underlying technology, however. They all grab pictures using light-sensitive semiconductors known as charge-coupled devices (CCDs)—the same image-sensing chips used in scanners, camcorders, and fax machines. These CCDs convert light into pixels, using red, green, and blue filters to produce color images. This results in digital data, which is then compressed and saved to memory—letting you easily transfer those images to your PC and integrate them into newsletters, presentations, e-mail, Web sites, and so on.

Also, almost all digital cameras can be used either with Windows or Macintosh computers (with the single exception of Logitech's FotoMan Pixtura, which works only with Windows PCs). But that's where the similarities cease for most models. Digital cameras literally come in all shapes and sizes, with a wide variety of features, picture qualities, capacities, and of course prices—even among the mainstream models that sell for less than $1,000. Here's how you judge which one is right for you.

Sizing up the Market

The difference in picture quality from one digital camera to another is the direct result of the varying performance levels among CCDs. Although virtually all digital cameras can save images in 24-bit color—don't settle for anything less—the resolutions vary. Standard 640x480 VGA resolution is the norm, but some models can do better or worse. Casio's popular QV-10A, for example, snaps pictures at only 480x240, while Canon's new PowerShot 600 can grab them at 832x608, the best resolution presently available in any under-$1,000 model.

You'll also find that the current selection of digital cameras offers a wide range of picture-holding capacities. This is because many models provide a choice of two or more levels of compression/resolution (often good, better, and best). Keep in mind, though, that higher amounts of compression generally result in less vibrant colors. The size of a camera's internal memory can also be a key factor in determining the number of exposures. Some cameras such as Chinon's ES-3000 and Dycam's 10-C hold as few as five pictures at maximum resolution. Epson's PhotoPC holds 16, while the Casio models can store a whopping 96 exposures, though at a lower resolution than their competitors.

Thanks for the Memory

Although the internal memory on most digital cameras is not upgradable, you can increase the picture capacity in many models by adding flash memory on Type I or Type II PC Cards—the same cards used by notebooks. Cameras at the high end of the under-$1,000 scale tend to have a PC Card slot, while those at the low end do not. Kodak's top-of-the-line DC50, for example, accepts PC Cards, while its inexpensive DC20 doesn't.

At the same time, nearly all sub-$1,000 digital cameras have auto-focus lenses and lack a manual focus—a preferred feature by many serious photographers. Manual-focus lenses can be found on many professional-level and mounted cameras, however.

By the same token, only some models offer a zoom lens. Again, economics prevail. The less costly Casio, Epson, and Kodak DC20 cameras lack zoom lenses, but it is a common feature among $1,000-and-above models. Dycam's DC-10 even has options for close-up, wide-angle, and telephoto lenses.

Most digital cameras come with a built-in flash regardless of price. However, Casio's QV-10A and QV-30 models, and Kodak's DC20 are notable exceptions. Some additionally offer have a multiple-mode flash feature. Epson's PhotoPC, for example, has three settings: auto, forced, and off.

Getting the Picture

Most digital cameras won't let you view your pictures until you transfer them to your PC. Casio's QV-10A, however, has a 1.8-inch-diagonal color LCD built right into its body for previewing pictures—a great way to see which are keepers and which are not. Its newer sibling, the QV-30, has an even larger 2.5-inch color LCD. Ricoh's RDC-1, meanwhile, offers an optional color LCD that connects to the side of the camera. The Casio and Ricoh models also have video output ports for connecting the cameras directly to a TV.

Casio QV-10A

All digital cameras come with at least basic image-transfer software and the cables needed to connect them to a PC and/or Mac. Most support the TWAIN standard as well. The quality of the software varies, however. Some programs offer more image-editing features than others, including auto-picture enhancement options. Kodak's DC20, for instance, which is targeted at home users, ships with a full version of MetaTools' Kai's Power Goo image-manipulation software. A few programs even have preview modes that can give you a peek at your photos, before saving them, when the camera is cabled to the PC.

The Photo Finish

Since the features and performance of digital cameras vary from one model to the next, it's no surprise that prices do, too. Most popular models are presently priced from about $350 to $1,000. You can certainly pay more: Canon, Nikon, Polaroid, and others make digital cameras targeted at professionals that sell for $3,000 or more. And Ricoh's modular RDC-1, which can also capture motion-video and audio clips, starts at about $1,600, although the total price can quickly climb to $2,500 or more with options.

If you want to bring your pictures into the information age, a digital camera is the way to go.

Digital Cameras for the Desktop

Most digital cameras are designed to be portable, letting you go where the images are. But there's a smaller class of digital cameras designed to stray no farther than your desktop—and capture moving as well as still images.

Why would you want a stationary digital camera? Typically, you'd need it for one of two reasons: document/product photography or videoconferencing. Smaller desktop digital cameras such as Connectix's original $99 QuickCam, which reproduces images in black and white, and the newer Color QuickCam (about $229) are ideal for mating with desktop videoconferencing systems since they can be mounted on top of a monitor.

Connectix QuickCam

Some videoconferencing systems include a camera of their own design or one they have bought from another company. Sony and others make such cameras. A few monitors even offer built-in video cameras. Nokia's 447Xavc, for instance, is a 17-inch unit with a built-in color video camera, omnidirectional microphone, and stereo loudspeakers for a $1,499 list price.

Not all stationary cameras are designed to be aimed at your face. Cameras such as Sony's PC Cam (about $499) and VideoLabs' FlexCam (about $395) each have flexible goosenecks that can be adjusted to almost any position—including straight down to capture overhead shots of documents or objects. Both can capture video as well as still images, and can focus on objects that are less than a half-inch away.

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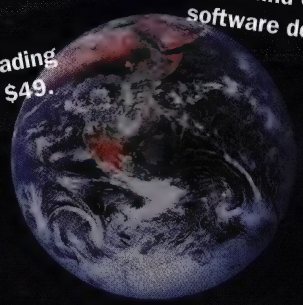

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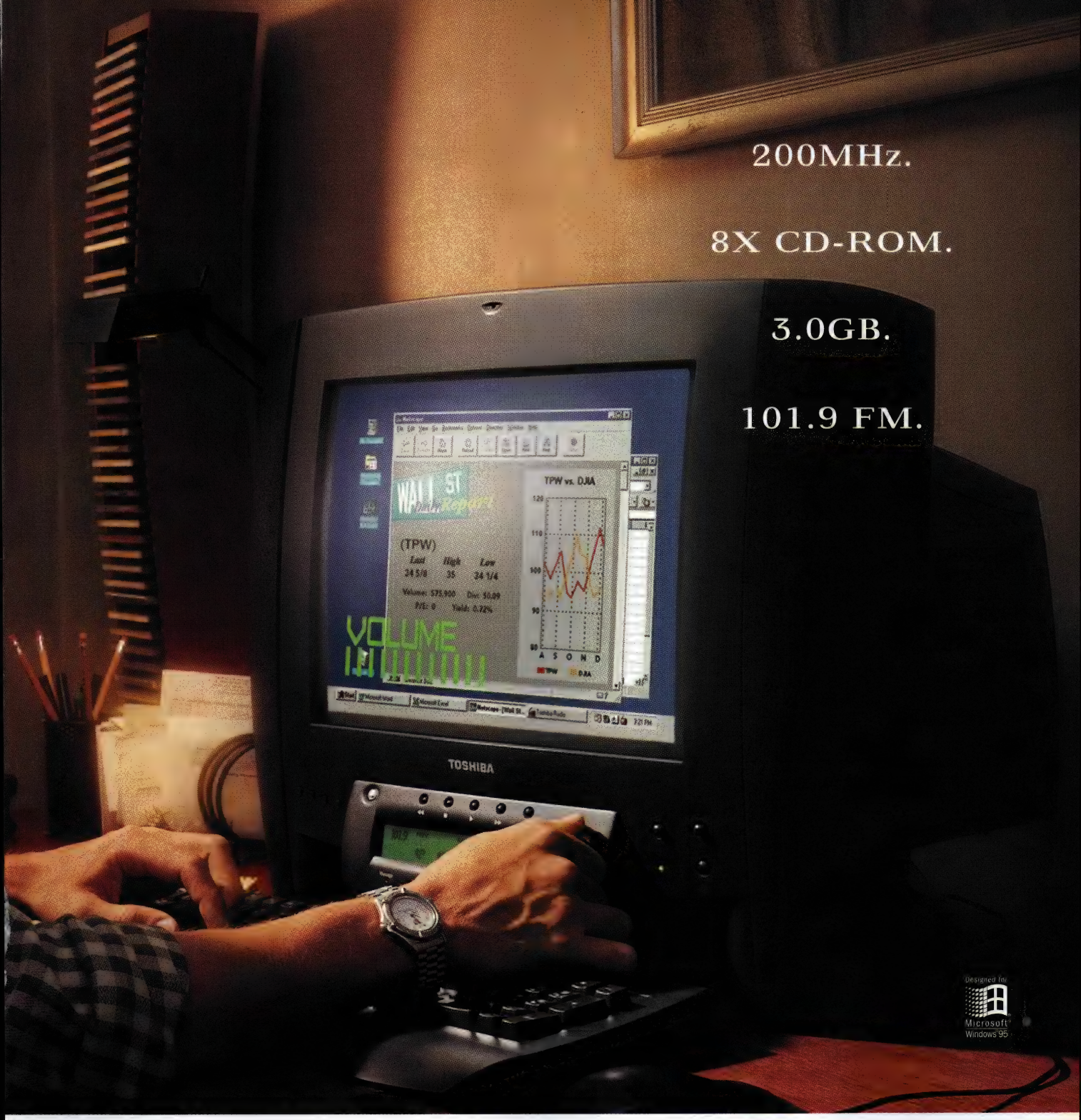

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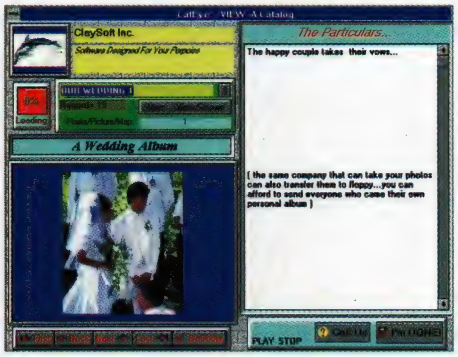

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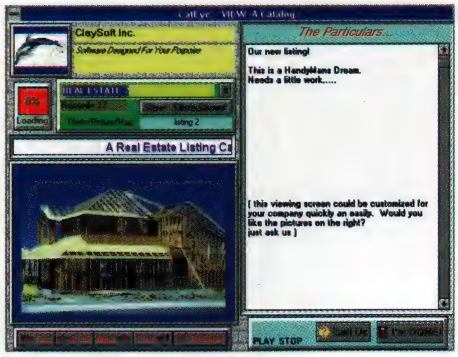

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MAKE THE MODEM connection

From no-frills fax and data to voice mail, there's a modem for every budget.

Your modem is your PC's ticket to ride, its access to the infinite resources of the Internet and online services. And just as a business-class or first-class ticket can make the ride more comfortable than a coach seat, a merely functional modem isn't always good enough. Although you'll probably be using your modem as a matter of routine—browsing the World Wide Web, managing e-mail, perhaps dialing from home into the office LAN—it's nice to get some cool features without spending too much extra.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

Let's start with some basics. The combination of price and performance has clearly established 28.8Kbps V.34 modems as today's online standard; any small savings you might net by buying a 14.4Kbps modem will instantly be offset by slower downloads and higher online-usage fees.

Power users may even be ready to jump on the next step—well, half a step—beyond the V.34 standard, to 33.6Kbps, available both in new modems and as a flash-ROM upgrade to many recent 28.8Kbps units. At press time, however, there was no major effort underway from online services or Internet service providers to support the 33.6Kbps protocol. Nevertheless, for modem-to-modem file-transfer or remote-control connections, 33.6Kbps can be a viable option, especially since the price premium will be minimal as these modems make their way into the marketplace.

The Inside Story

Whether you opt for an internal or external modem depends on how comfortable you feel about opening and configuring your PC. You can save a few dollars with an internal modem (usually $20 to $30 off the price of comparable external models), though you may miss the status lights that help

BY RIVKA TADJER

external-modem owners troubleshoot connection glitches.

Notebook PC users don't really have a choice in this matter; if your notebook didn't come with a built-in modem, you're in the market for a PC Card. Although PC Card modems once had a well-earned reputation for being difficult to install, there's been significant progress on that front; most vendors now offer Plug and Play installation under Windows 95.

In fact, it would be difficult to buy a notebook today that didn't come equipped with the necessary modem drivers preloaded. At the same time, prices for 28.8Kbps PC Card modems have fallen sharply, although you can still expect to pay $80 to $120 more than you would for a comparable desktop modem.

Price and Performance

For a standard no-frills V.34 modem with 14.4Kbps fax capability, you can expect to pay between $100 and $150. Internal modems in this class include Cardinal Technologies' MVPV34I (about $130), Boca Research's V.34 On-Line Express (about $100), and U.S. Robotics' Sportster Winmodem (about $150). External examples are Diamond's SupraExpress 336e (about $150) and Hayes' Total Internet Solution (about $180).

If you want voice capability, you'll pay between $190 and $300, depending on whether you choose an internal or external model, included software and telephony features, or bundled telephone-headset hardware. A growing number of modems can handle voice mail, storing incoming messages to your PC's hard drive, while others offer both voice mail-boxes and speakerphone capability. Some contenders here are Diamond's Supra Sonic 336V+ (about $280), Zoom Telephonics' ComStar EX (about $260), and Boca's SoundExpression 28.8SRS (about $310), a combined modem, speakerphone, and multimedia sound card.

Technically speaking, you've probably heard a lot about what are called voice-over-data (VOD) technologies, such as Radish's VoiceView—an analog technology

Connecting to the Net

Not so long ago connecting to the Internet was an arcane process that required intimacy with Unix, routers, and more. Today a reliable, feature-rich Internet connection is just a phone call away. And with long-distance heavyweights such as AT&T, MCI, and Sprint joining CompuServe, America Online, and independents such as Netcom in the Internet service provider (ISP) arena, prices are falling, local access numbers are proliferating, and access speed is gaining momentum.

To get on the Internet, you'll need three things.

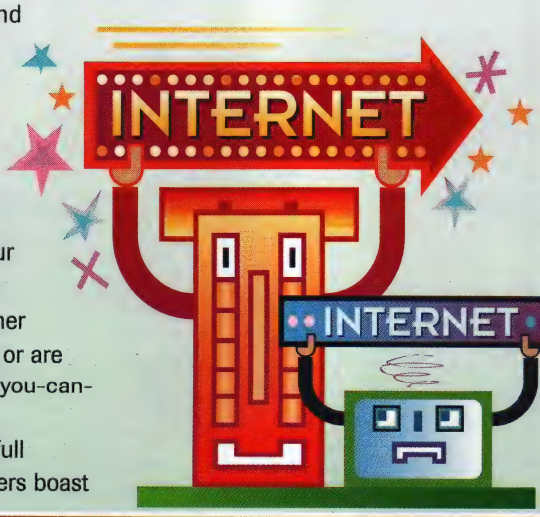
■ **An ISP:** Which Internet service provider you choose depends on your location, your travel needs, and the services you want, as well as on whether you prefer to pay by the hour or are seeking a $20-per-month, all-you-can-browse bargain deal.

Some ISPs don't deliver full Usenet newsgroup feeds; others boast local access numbers in every major U.S. city. Connection speed is also important—if you're planning to upgrade to an ISDN or cable modem, your provider must support this technology. Bear in mind that the level of support and services offered varies greatly among ISPs. Get recommendations from users wherever possible.

■ **A Winsock connection:** If you're running Windows 95 or Windows NT, simply use the operating system's Dial-Up Networking features (accessed through the Network applet in the Control Panel) to set up a session, called a connectoid, with your ISP. Before you start you'll need to know the latter's IP address and DNS server address and your user name, password, and domain name.

If your ISP doesn't support automatic PPP login, you'll have to use the connectoid you created in Dial-Up Networking to set the Bring Up Terminal Screen After Dialing option. If you're running Windows 3.1, you'll need a TCP/IP dialer package such as Trumpet Winsock or CompuServe's NetLauncher. Make sure your ISP will supply one.

■ **TCP/IP software:** Besides a Web browser (the dueling leaders are Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer), you'll need a newsgroup reader and an e-mail program. These features are increasingly being bundled into browsers, but there are still plenty of à la carte choices available, including the Exchange e-mail client in Windows 95.



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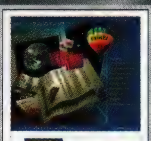
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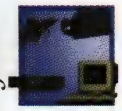

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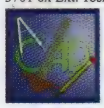

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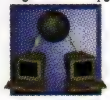

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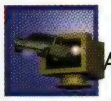

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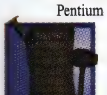

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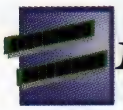

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that lets you alternate data and voice transmissions during the same call—and Digital Simultaneous Voice and Data (DSVD). These innovations work well for document conferencing and technical-support applications, but as the market stands right now, they've only caught on for a few online malls and tech-support sites. Their primary users are gamers who like to taunt each other while dueling to the death via modems.

U.S. Robotics Courier

Also, if you think modem-based voice mail sounds like a nifty gadget, you're right, but the technology has its limits for single-line users, compared to the voice-mail services that may be available from your regional phone company for under $10 per month. With phone-company voice mail, you essentially get a second line for incoming calls, automatically bounced over to your voice mailbox if you're on the phone. Not so with a voice modem; the second call will simply not get through.

Finally, it's not clear whether 33.6Kbps will be the last hurrah for today's analog modems and phone lines. At press time, vendors were dropping hints about 56Kbps modems, but they'd only work with large online services and Internet providers, not for PC-to-PC links, and wouldn't be a factor until mid-1997. The demand for ever-faster Internet access continues to drive the industry toward digital pathways such as ISDN (see sidebar) and cable modems.

But that just means today's modems are the most sophisticated ever, as well as the best bargains. There's no excuse for still poking along at 9,600 or 14.4Kbps.

Do You Need ISDN?

IF you're heavily wrapped up in the Net, an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) connection can be the answer to your prayers. It offers both blistering online speeds and convenient data/voice versatility. Not only is ISDN fast—offering transmission rates ranging from 56Kbps to 128Kbps—but with recent price cuts by telcos and Internet service providers, it's also more affordable than even six months ago. Monthly charges in particular have fallen precipitously, with rates as low as $30 to $40 in some regions (and admittedly, as high as $100 in more rural areas).

Startup costs, however, are still on the steep side. You can expect to pay between $200 and $500 for an ISDN modem; then your phone company will charge you $150 to $250 for installation. On top of that, you'll get charged a penny or two per minute for each of the two channels that make up the digital conduit. Finally, you'll have to pay a premium to your ISP for ISDN access, especially if you're connecting at 128Kbps.

If you've done the math and it still pays to use ISDN for your household, you need to decide what kind of equipment best suits your needs and what type of service you want from your telco. Most likely you'll opt for a Basic Rate Interface (BRI) connection, which gives you two 64Kbps channels—or, in some areas served by older phone switches, two 56Kbps channels.

You can use both for data, or one for data and one for voice simultaneously. Many ISDN terminal adapters (popularly called ISDN modems) automatically switch from two-channel to single-channel mode when you pick up the phone to place a voice call. If you've already got an extra pair of phone lines, you'll pay less, as all the telco technicians will need to do is change the RJ-11 phone jacks to RJ-45 ISDN jacks. Note, however, that you may want to retain your old analog line instead of making ISDN your home's only link with the world—unlike classic phones, ISDN goes down during power failures.

Similarly, you'll need to decide whether to get an all-digital ISDN adapter, such as Cardinal Technologies' internal IDC100i (list $199), or one that also has built-in analog ports for connection to conventional modems, phones, and fax and answering machines, such as Motorola's external BitSurfr Pro (about $370). U.S. Robotics' Courier I-Modem (about $530) combines an ISDN adapter with a V.34 analog modem.

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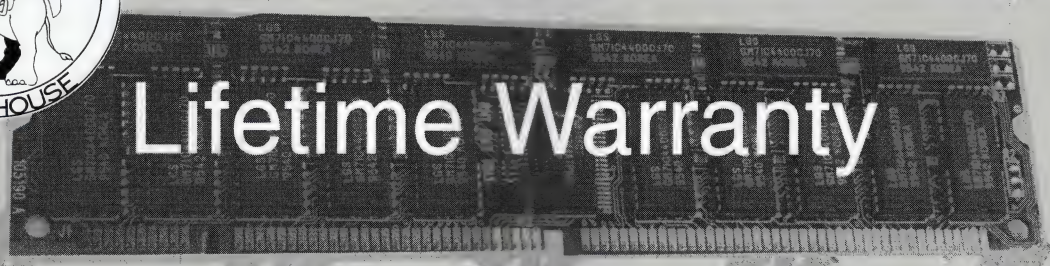

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MODEMS

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	TYPE	MAX. DATA SPEED (Kbps)	MAX. FAX SEND/REC. (Kbps)	ADDITIONAL FEATURES
ActionTec Electronics	DataLink 28.8 PC	$219	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
ActionTec Electronics	DataLink 33.6 PC	$269	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
ActionTec Electronics	ComNet 28.8 PC	$329	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, E
Amquest	AM2814I-HY	$199	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	None
Amquest	AM2814IV-HY	$239	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	VM
Amquest	Commando	$249	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	VM, DSVD, SC, FDSP
Amquest	AM3314IV-HY	$279	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM
Angia Communications	SafeJack 28.8	$279	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Angia Communications	SafeJack Ethernet/28.8 Combo	$439	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, LL, E
Angia Communications	I-Bahn ISDN/28.8 Combo	$595	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, ISDN
Apex Data	Mobile Plus Cellular V.34	$272	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Apex Data	ClipperCom World V.34	$299	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Archtek America	SmartLink 3334BAV	$108	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, FDSP
Archtek America	SmartLink 3334A	$140	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	None
Archtek America	SmartLink 3334AV	$150	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM, VV, FDSP
Archtek America	SmartLink 2834PCA	$150	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE
Best Data Products	Smart One 33.6 F	$139	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE, VV
Best Data Products	Smart One 33.6 FLX	$159	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE, VV
Best Data Products	Smart One 33.6 VLX	$179	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, CE, VV
Best Data Products	Smart One 33.6 LXSP	$189	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, CE, VV, FDSP
Black Box	Speedster 288 MD360A	$200	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
Boca Research	BocaModem MV.34I	$209	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
Boca Research	BocaModem MV.34E	$239	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	None
Boca Research	BocaOffice Communicator	$249	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, DSVD, FDSP
Boca Research	Sound Expression 28.8 SRS	$369	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, DSVD, SC, FDSP
Cardinal Technologies	MVPV34I	$134	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR
Cardinal Technologies	MVPV34XF	$154	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR
Cardinal Technologies	MVP34ISP	$159	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, FR, VV, SVD, FDSP
Cardinal Technologies	MVPV34-XSP	$179	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, FR, VV, SVD, FDSP
Cardinal Technologies	MVPV34PC	$209	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Champion	28.8 Data/Fax Modem	$199	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP
Compaq	SpeedPaq 288	$299	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, FR, CE, VV, FDSP
ConnectWare	Phoneworks 33.6 To Go	$329	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, FR, CE, VV, FDSP
ConnectWare	ISDN Ext+	$469	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, FDSP, ISDN
ConnectWare	ISDN+ To Go	$619	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, FDSP, ISDN
Creative Labs	Internet Blaster 33.6 Internal	$129	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
Creative Labs	Modem Blaster 28.8 External	$159	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP
Creative Labs	Phone Blaster 28.8 PnP	$270	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, SC, FDSP
Creative Labs	Phone Blaster 33.6 PnP	$270	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, SC, FDSP
D-Link Systems	DME-Winconnect 288T	$399	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, E
Dayna Communications	Communicard Data/Fax Modem	$359	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Dayna Communications	Communicard Ethernet Modem	$549	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, E
Diamond Multimedia	SupraSimple Internet 336i	$139	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
Diamond Multimedia	SupraExpress 336e PnPI	$149	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
Diamond Multimedia	SupraSimple Internet 336e	$159	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
Diamond Multimedia	SupraExpress 336iSP	$189	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, FDSP
Diamond Multimedia	SupraSonic 336V+	$289	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, FR
E-Tech	PC28.8VMXP	$96	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, FDSP
E-Tech	PC33.6VMK	$99	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM, VV, FDSP
E-Tech	E33.6VMK	$129	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	RC, VM, VV, FDSP
EFA/Shark Multimedia	Thresher 28.8 RV	$130	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	VM
EFA/Shark Multimedia	Thresher 33.6 RV	$140	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM
EFA/Shark Multimedia	Baby Tiger 28.8 R	$200	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	VM, VV, DSVD, FDSP
EFA/Shark Multimedia	Tiger 28.8 R	$240	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	VM, VV, DSVD, SC, FDSP
Eiger Labs	Head On (EFX-2880NG)	$199	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	RC, VM, FR, DSVD, SC, SP

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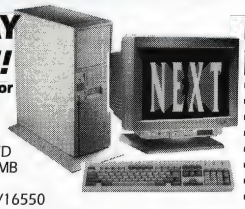

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MODEMS

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	TYPE	MAX. DATA SPEED (Kbps)	MAX. FAX SEND/REC. (Kbps)	ADDITIONAL FEATURES
Eiger Labs	EigerCom 33.6 (EFX-3360P)	$219	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE
ELSA	MicroLink 28.8 TQV	$299	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, E
EXP Computer	Thinfax 288c	$249	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE
Fujitsu MicroElectronics	33.6 Modem/Fax	$299	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR
Fujitsu MicroElectronics	28.8 Cellular Ready Fax/Modem	$329	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, CE
Fujitsu MicroElectronics	LAN/Modem 33.6 Combo Card	$495	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, E
Global Village Comm.	PowerPort Platinum PC Card	$399	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, CE, SC
GVC/MaxTech	XPM-336 NetPacr	$129	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
GVC/MaxTech	XPUSZ88I	$169	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, FDSP
GVC/MaxTech	PMN 2028	$299	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, E
Hayes	Total Internet Solution	$163 (min.)	ISA or E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
Hayes	Office Comm. Manager	$189 (min.)	ISA or E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, SC, FDSP
Hayes	Total Gaming Solution	$259 (min.)	ISA or E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, VV, DSVD, SC, FDSP
Hayes	Optima 288 PCMCIA	$269	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR
Hayes	Optima Business	$299 (min.)	ISA or E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, SC
I/O Magic	Magic Surfer (33.6)	$200	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, SC, FDSP
I/O Magic	Magic Surfer (28.8)	$300	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP
IBM	ISA V.34	$109	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	FR
IBM	PCMCIA V.34	$179	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	FR
IBM	PCMCIA 28.8 (V.34)/14.4	$288	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	FR, CE
IBM	Multimedia Modem Plus	$299	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	VM, FR, DSVD, SC, FDSP
IBM	PCMCIA 28.8 (V.34)/14.4 Intl.	$349	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	None
J-Mark	81433VQH	$149	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM, FR, SC, FDSP
Linksys	PCMCIA LAN/Modem Card	$499	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, E
Logicode Technology	Quicktel 33H	$159	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, CE
Logicode Technology	Quicktel 33H-V	$169	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, CE
Logicode Technology	Quicktel 33X-V	$239	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, CE
Logicode Technology	Quicktel II 33X-ASP-E	$349	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, CE, VV, DSVD, FDSP
Longshine Microsys	33.6 LCO 3314B	$90	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM, SP
MagicRAM	PC Card 28.8	$275	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE
Microcom	DeskPorte 28.8S int	$260	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	CE
Microcom	DeskPorte 28.8S	$276	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE
Microcom	DeskPorte 28.8P	$344	E/P, S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Microcom	TravelCard 28.8P	$378	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Microcom	TravelCard Fast	$599	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, CE
Motorola	Modem Sufr 28.8 ISA	$116	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP
Motorola	Modem Sufr 28.8 Ext	$135	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP
Motorola	Online Sufr 28.8 ISA	$140	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP
Motorola	OnlineSufr 28.8 Ext	$160	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP
Motorola	Premier 33.6 ISA	$361	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR
Motorola	Premier 33.6 Ext	$386	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR
Multi-Tech Systems	MT2834ZDXb	$269	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC
Multi-Tech Systems	MT2834ZPX	$269	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC
Multi-Tech Systems	MT2834ZDXv	$299	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM
Multi-Tech Systems	MT2834LT	$299	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR
Multi-Tech Systems	MT2834PCS2	$599	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, DSVD
NewCom	33.6fx	$100	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	FR
NewCom	33.6efx	$126	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	CE, VV
NewCom	Speakerphone	$130	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM, FR, FDSP
NewCom	DSVD	$200	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM, FR, DSVD, FDSP
Olicom	GoCard ET/Modem 288	$449	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, E
Olicom	GoCard TRN/Modem 336	$629	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, TO
Ositech	Jack of Diamonds	$459	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, E
Ositech	Queen of Diamonds	$499	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, SC
PowerCom	PM3314i	$149	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC
PowerCom	PM-33VI4i	$159	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	RC, VM, FDSP

CE = cellular capability; **E** = Ethernet connectivity; **E/P** = external parallel; **E/S** = external serial; **FDSP** = full-duplex speaker phone; **FR** = flash ROM-upgradable; **LL** = leased-line capability; **PnP** = Plug and Play; **RC** = remote configuration; **SC** = sound-card capability; **SP** = speaker phone; **TO** = Token Ring connectivity; **VM** = voice mail; **VV** = VoiceView; ***** = info. not provided

Family Value System

PCI Motherboard
EIDE & Fast I/O
256K L2 Cache
8 Mb EDO Ram
1.0 Gig EIDE Hard Drive
14.4 Fax / Modem
8x CD-ROM
14" SVGA .28 DP Monitor
STB Horizon 1 Mb PCI 64 Bit
16 Bit Sound Card w/ Speakers
3.5" Floppy Disk Drive
Mini Tower
3 Button Mouse
Win 95 Keyboard
Windows 95
CD Software Bundle
Internet Software Bundle

AMD 5x86 133	$ 989.90
Pentium 75	$ 1059.90
Pentium 100	$ 1089.90
Pentium 133	$ 1174.90

Performance Pentium

Intel Pentium® Processor
Intel Triton II Chipset
256K Pipeline Burst Cache
16 Mb EDO Ram
1.6 Gig EIDE Hard Drive
28.8 Fax / Modem
8x Toshiba CD-ROM
15" Techmedia Monitor
STB Horizon 2 Mb PCI 64 Bit
Sound Blaster 16 Pnp w/ Speakers
3.5" Floppy Disk Drive
Mid Tower Case
3 Button Mouse
Win 95 Keyboard
Windows 95
CD Software Bundle
Internet Software Bundle

Pentium 100	$ 1324.90
Pentium 133	$ 1399.90
Pentium 166	$ 1624.90
Pentium 200	$ CALL

Super Pentium Pro

Intel Pentium® Pro Processor
Intel Natoma Chipset
256K Pipeline Burst Cache
32 Mb EDO Ram
2.0 Gig EIDE Hard Drive
33.6 Fax / Modem
8x Toshiba CD-ROM
15" Viewsonic Optiquest Monitor
Diamond Stealth 64 - 2 Meg
Sound Blaster 16 Pnp w/ Speakers
3.5" Floppy Disk Drive
Full Tower Case
3 Button Mouse
104 Key Keyboard
Windows 95*
CD Software Bundle
Internet Software Bundle

Pentium Pro 150	$ 2024.90
Pentium Pro 180	$ 2089.90
Pentium Pro 200	$ 2299.90

*Win NT 4.0 Upgrade $ 192.00

Hard Drives

Western Digital - 3 Yr. Warranty

850 Meg, 10ms, AC2850	$ 169.00
1.2 Gig, 10ms, AC21200	$ 212.00
1.6 Gig, 10ms, AC31600	$ 236.00
2.1 Gig, 10ms, AC32100	$ 297.00
2.5 Gig, 10ms, AC32600	$ 357.00
3.1 Gig, 11ms, AC33100	$ 434.00

Maxtor - 3 Yr. Warranty

1.3 Gig, 12ms, M71336A	$ 193.00
1.6 Gig, 12ms, M71626AP	$ 220.00
2.0 Gig, 12ms, M72004A	$ 264.00

Seagate - 3 Yr. Warranty

850 Meg, 14ms, ST3851A	$ 160.00
1.0 Gig, 14ms, ST31081A	$ 179.00
1.2 Gig, 10.5ms, ST51270A	$ 199.00
1.2 Gig, 12ms, ST31276A	$ 186.00
1.6 Gig, 14ms, ST31621A	$ 224.00
2.1 Gig, 10.5ms, ST32140A	$ 280.00
4.2 Gig, 10.5ms, ST34250A	$ CALL

Video Cards

Simply The Best - Lifetime Warranty

Horizon, 1 Mb, DRAM	$ 59.00
Horizon, 2 Mb, DRAM	$ 69.00
Lightspeed 128, 2 Mb, DRAM	$ 189.00

Diamond Video Cards - 5 Yr. Warranty

Stealth 64, 1 Mb, DRAM	$ 79.00
Stealth 64, 2 Mb, DRAM	$ 99.00
Stealth 64, 3D, 2 Mb, DRAM	$ 129.00
Stealth 64, 3D, 2 Mb, VRAM	$ CALL

Matrox

Mystique - 2 Meg	$ 168.00
Mystique - 4 Meg	$ 223.00

ATI

Graphics EXP, 1 Mb DRAM	$ 84.00
Graphics EXP, 2 Mb DRAM	$ 94.00
Graphics Pro Turbo, 2 Mb VRAM	$ 225.00
Graphics Pro Turbo, 4 Mb VRAM	$ 320.00
Xclaim GA, 4 Mb VRAM	$ 331.00

Monitors

Viewsonic Monitors - Plug & Play

14" 1000S, .28, 1024x768	$ 246.00
15" 1562A, .28, 1024x768	$ 325.00
17" 1769DC, .28, 1280x1024	$ 560.00
17" V775, .26, 1600x1200	$ 689.00
14" 14ES, .28, 1024x768	$ 257.00
15" 15ES, .28, 1024x768	$ 344.00
17" 17EA, .28, 1280x1024	$ 629.00
17" 17PS, .25, 1600x1200	$ 699.00
21" P810, .30AG, 1600x1200	$ 1629.00

Techmedia Monitors

14" SVGA 1024x768, .28	$ 237.00
15" SVGA 1024x768, .28	$ 289.00
17" SVGA 1200x1024, .28	$ 561.00

MAG Monitors - Plug & Play

14" DX1495, .28, 1024x768	CALL
15" DX1595, .28, 1280x1024	FOR
15" DX15T, .25, 1280x1024	LOWEST
17" DX1795, .26, 1280x1024	PRICE

Extras

Fax/Modems

14.4 Fax/Modem	$ 31.00
28.8 Fax/Modem	$ 85.00
33.6 Fax/Modem	$ 99.00
U.S. Robotics 28.8 Internal	$ 142.00
U.S. Robotics 28.8 External	$ 162.00

Motherboards

Triton II Motherboard - 2 Year Warranty
Intel Triton II Chipset, 256K Pipeline Burst Cache, 4-72 Pin Sockets, EDO and SDRAM Support, 3 PCI, 4 ISA, EIDE, 4 Hard, 2 Floppy, 2 Serial, 1 Parallel.

Motherboard Only	$ 112.00
Motherboard & Pentium 75	$ 217.00
Motherboard & Pentium 100	$ 246.00
Motherboard & Pentium 133	$ 323.00
Motherboard & Pentium 166	$ 517.00
Motherboard & Pentium 200	$ CALL

Barebones Systems (Above Motherboard & Processor)

Add a Mini Tower, 8 Meg EDO, 1 Meg Video	$ 127.00
Add a Mid Tower, 16 Meg EDO, 1 Meg Video	$ 175.00
Add a Mid Tower, 16 Meg EDO, 2 Meg Video	$ 194.00
Add a Full Tower, 16 Meg EDO, 1 Meg Video	$ 195.00
Add a Full Tower, 32 Meg EDO, 2 Meg Video	$ 305.00

MultiMedia

CD-ROMS

8x Toshiba	$ 114.00
8x Mitsumi	$ 107.00
8x Acer	$ 99.00

Sound Cards

Sound Blaster 16 Pnp w/ 3D Sound	$ 73.00
Sound Blaster 32 Pnp w/ 3D Sound	$ 139.00
Sound Blaster AWE 32 Pnp w/ 3D Sound	$ 236.00

Multimedia Kits

Value Multimedia 8x — $ 233.00
8x Acer CD-ROM, Sound Blaster 16 Pnp w/ 3D
180 Watt Stereo Speakers, 20 or more CD-Rom Titles!

Super Speed 8x — $ 314.00
8x Toshiba CD-ROM, Sound Blaster 32 Pnp w/3D
180 Watt Stereo Speakers, 20 or more CD-Rom Titles!

Magic Micro

- ✓ GIGANTIC SELECTION!
- ✓ KNOWLEGABLE SALES STAFF!
- ✓ 30 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!
- ✓ 3 YEAR WARRANTY ON ALL SYSTEMS!
- ✓ FREE TECHNICAL SUPPORT!
- ✓ NO CREDIT CARD SURCHARGE!
- ✓ HIGH VOLUME BIDS WELCOME!
- ✓ SPECIAL PRICING FOR RESELLERS!

Don't see the brand or item you need? Give us a call - we have hundreds of brands to choose from!

Prices subject to change without notice. RMA number required on all returns. RMA's shipped prepaid. Returns for credit or refund must be received within 30 days and in resellable condition with original packaging. Manufacturers warranties apply. Shipping charges are non refundable. Not responsible for typographical errors. We reserve the right to refuse any sale for any reason.

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Monday - Friday 9am-9pm EST
Saturday 12pm-6pm EST

VISA MasterCard DISCOVER

MODEMS

COMPANY	MODEL	LIST PRICE	TYPE	MAX. DATA SPEED (Kbps)	MAX. FAX SEND/REC. (Kbps)	ADDITIONAL FEATURES
PowerCom	PM-3314e	$189	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	RC
PowerCom	PM-2814PC	$219	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	RC
Practical Peripherals	Practical 288 V.34 MiniTower II	$189	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	None
Practical Peripherals	ProClass PC Card 288T2-EZ-Port	$249	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR
Practical Peripherals	ProClass V.34 with LCD	$309	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC
SIIG	Dash 28.8i	$169	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	None
Silicom Connectivity	SEM/TP 28.8	*	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, E
Simple Technology	33.6 Communicator w/SimpleJack	$249	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, CE, SC
Spectrum Signal	V.34 Office Fax	$229	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	VM, DSVD, SC, FDSP
Standard Microsystems	EtherEZ PC Card & Modem	$503	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, E
TDK Systems	CyberExpress 3000	$249	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR
TDK Systems	DF2814 V.34 Modem Card	$269	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, CE
TDK Systems	DataVoice 3400	$349	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, FR, CE, VV
TDK Systems	DF2814C V.34 Global Class	$419	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR
Telebit	Teleblazer	$349	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	None
Telebit	Teleblazer PCMCIA	$459	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	None
Texas Instruments	28.8/Cellular Ready/DataFax	$299	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, CE, FDSP
Texas Instruments	28.8 Combo/Cellular Ready	$429	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, FDSP, E, +
Toshiba	nw288cr	$299	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Trendware International	TFM-288P	$299	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Trendware International	TEM-288T	$399	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, E
U.S. Robotics	Sportster WinModem 28.8	$179	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
U.S. Robotics	Sportster 28.8/33.6	$199	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
U.S. Robotics	Sportster 28.8/33.6	$219	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP
U.S. Robotics	Sportster Vi 28.8 DSVD	$219	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, DSVD
U.S. Robotics	Sportster Voice 28.8/33.6	$249	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM, FDSP
U.S. Robotics Mobile	Megahertz XJ4288	$269	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, CE
U.S. Robotics Mobile	Megahertz XJEMB288	$349	PC Card	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, CE, E
WildCard Technologies	SatisFAXtion 428	$399	ISA	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR
Xircom	CreditCard Modem	$259	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE
Xircom	CreditCard Ethernet + Modem	$359	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, FR, CE, E
Zoltrix	FM-VOC336i	*	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	VM
Zoom Telephonics	V.34 I Plus	$149	ISA	33.6	14.4/14.4	CE
Zoom Telephonics	V.34 X Plus	$199	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	CE
Zoom Telephonics	ComStar EX	$259	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, VM, CE, VV, SVD, FDSP
Zoom Telephonics	PC Card V.34 C Plus	$269	PC Card	33.6	14.4/14.4	FR, CE
Zypcom	Z34-SE	$499	E/S	33.6	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, FR, CE
ZyXel	Omni 288S	$359	E/S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, CE
ZyXel	Elite 2864I	$629	E/P, S	28.8	14.4/14.4	PnP, RC, VM, FR, CE, ISDN

CE = cellular capability; **E** = Ethernet connectivity; **E/P** = external parallel; **E/S** = external serial; **FDSP** = full-duplex speaker phone; **FR** = flash ROM-upgradable; **LL** = leased-line capability; **PnP** = Plug and Play; **RC** = remote configuration; **SC** = sound-card capability; **SP** = speaker phone; **TO** = Token Ring connectivity; **VM** = voice mail; **VV** = VoiceView; ***** = info. not provided

COMPANY LIST

ActionTec Electronics 408-739-7000
Amquest 800-577-3335
Angia Communications ..800-877-9159
Apex Data 800-841-2739
Archtek America.....818-912-9800
Best Data Products 818-773-9600
Black Box 412-746-5500
Boca Research.....561-997-6227
Cardinal Technologies 800-775-0899
Champion 800-860-7466
Compaq.....800-345-1518
ConnectWare 800-357-0852
Creative Labs.....800-998-1000
D-Link Systems 800-326-1688
Dayna Communications..800-531-0600
Diamond Multimedia 800-727-8772
E-Tech 800-328-5538
EFA/Shark Multimedia....800-800-3321
Eiger Labs 800-653-4437
ELSA 800-272-3572
EXP Computer 516-496-3703
Fujitsu MicroElectronics 800-642-7616
Global Village Comm. 408-523-1000
GVC/MaxTech 800-936-7629
Hayes 770-840-9200
I/O Magic 800-607-7466
IBM 800-426-4968
J-Mark 818-814-9472
Linksys 714-261-1288
Logicode Technology 800-735-6442
Longshine Microsys 310-903-0899
MagicRAM 800-272-6242
Microcom 800-822-8224
Motorola 800-426-6336
Multi-Tech Systems.....800-328-9717
NewCom 818-597-3200
Olicom.....800-265-4266
Ositech 888-674-8324
PowerCom.....800-666-8931
Practical Peripherals.....770-840-9200
SIIG 510-657-8688
Silicom Connectivity 206-882-7995
Simple Technology 800-367-7330
Spectrum Signal.....800-667-0018
Standard Microsystems 800-762-4968
TDK Systems 800-999-4835
Telebit 800-835-3248
Texas Instruments 800-848-3927
Toshiba 800-334-3445
Trendware International..310-328-7795
U.S. Robotics 800-342-5877
U.S. Robotics Mobile 800-527-8677
WildCard Technologies ..800-661-8210
Xircom.....805-376-9300
Zoltrix 510-657-1188
Zoom Telephonics 800-631-3116
Zypcom 510-783-2501
ZyXel.....714-693-0808

This holiday give someone Back-UPS® Office™ and they'll thank you 120 times a month

Take the Multipath Quiz for a chance to win a $2,000 Shopping Spree

The holiday season is a happy time, unless the overload of flashing lights or a starting furnace causes a power sag. Then your computer pays the price for holiday cheer. A recent study by IBM showed that the typical computer experiences power problems 120 times a month. In fact, corrupt power is the largest single cause of computer data loss and hardware damage.

Back-UPS Office provides reliable power for your entire system. Instantaneous battery backup ensures uninterrupted operation of your CPU, monitor and an external storage device. Full-time surge suppression and site-wiring fault protection spreads a true Multipath safety net under any remaining integrated peripherals, like modems, printers, fax machines and phone systems. Back-UPS Office also provides convenient BlockSafe™ outlet spacing to handle all size plugs – even large transformer blocks.

Unique Multipath protection keeps your PC and data safe

Plugging a phone line into your computer doubles your vulnerability to power problems; add any peripheral, and it triples. Even if your AC power-line is shielded, when a surge hits an unprotected peripheral, it can blaze down serial cables and datalines, and toast your expensive PC.

Back-UPS Office protects your entire system

Until now, protection for your entire system required several devices. But multi-device protection can leave you vulnerable to line noise and unwanted data glitches created by the voltage differential between outlets. Those glitches are prevented with the Back-UPS Office common voltage reference.

NEC's Ready Office™ delivers unmatched reliability and low costs of ownership with a best-in-class combination of CPU performance and data storage. And right now every unit comes with "the world's most reliable power protection:" APC's award-winning Multipath Back-UPS Office. That means Ready Office is the worlds most reliable computer – right out of the box. To learn more about the NEC Ready Office product line featuring unique Ready-Safe features, please call: 1-800-NEC-INFO (800-632-4636) or visit the NEC Web site at: www.nec.com

Back-UPS Office means true Multipath protection, clean, safe power to every peripheral, and instant battery backup to keep your cutting edge system and O/S from crashing. It means protection for less by integrating the security of a surge suppressor with the power of a 250 VA UPS, guaranteed up to $25,000 (see policy for details).

LIFETIME EQUIPMENT PROTECTION

$25,000

FOR AS LONG AS YOU OWN THIS PRODUCT, IF YOUR PROPERLY CONNECTED EQUIPMENT IS EVER DAMAGED BY AN AC SURGE, INCLUDING SURGES DUE TO LIGHTNING, APC WILL REPAIR OR REPLACE OUR PRODUCT AND UP TO $25,000 OF CONNECTED EQUIPMENT (SEE POLICY FOR DETAILS, VALID IN U.S. AND CANADA ONLY).

"...for any PC today--especially if you run your business on it — [a UPS] is an indispensable peripheral." — *PC MAGAZINE*

APC has won more awards for reliability than all other UPS vendors combined.

APC Multipath Quiz Rules:
Follow the instructions on the reply card for a chance to win a shopping spree at a participating store (listed below).

Prizes:

First: $2,000
Second: $1,000
Third:.....$500

Complete the quiz at www.apcc.com and be entered in a second drawing for a free t-shirt! All entries must be received by 12/01/96. Drawing to be held 12/15/96.

Available at:

GLOBAL COMPUTER SUPPLIES 800-326-0613

800-726-4239

CDW COMPUTER DISCOUNT WAREHOUSE

MicroWAREHOUSE 1-800-367-7080

WIN A $2,000 SHOPPING SPREE!

Answer the quiz questions correctly (Hint: Answers are in the ad), fill out the information below completely and send to APC or enter from our PowerPage™ on the Web, for a chance to win a $2,000 Shopping Spree. We'll send you a Free 60 page Power Protection Handbook just for trying.

1. Multipath power protection means surge suppression on...
   ☐ Dataline ☐ Computer AC ☐ Peripheral AC ☐ All of the above
2. APC insures surge damaged equipment properly attached to a Back-UPS Office up to...
   ☐ $1,000 ☐ $5,000 ☐ $25,000
3. If I plug my external modem into a surge suppressor and the dataline into the wall, my computer is safe from power problems. ☐ True ☐ False
4. My transformer block plugs will fit Back-UPS Office without covering an extra outlet
   ☐ True ☐ False

Name:_____ Title:_____

Company: _____

Address: _____

_____

City: _____ State:_____ Zip:_____ Country: _____

Phone:_____ Fax:_____

E-Mail: _____

Is this your first contact with APC? ☐ Yes ☐ No I am an ☐ End User ☐ Reseller

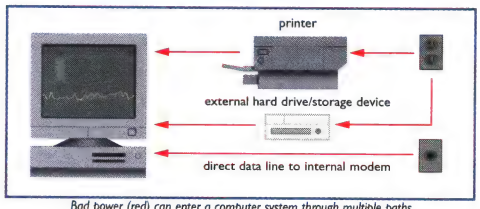
# of workstations on site/sold per month:_____ Brand of UPS currently used/sold: _____

Over 6,000,000 satisfied customers agree: "Protect ME! with APC".

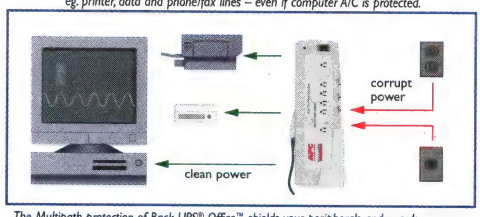
Steve Richbourg
Senior Power Quality Engineer
Gulf Power Company

"I just got my first Back-UPS Office. I've purchased seven since because people keep stopping by my desk and saying they want it! Recommending power protection is what I do for a living, and I've never had an upset customer in more than four years recommending APC."

Multipath Means Total Power Protection



Bad power (red) can enter a computer system through multiple paths eg. printer, data and phone/fax lines – even if computer A/C is protected.



The Multipath protection of Back-UPS® Office™ shields your peripherals and guards your computer from bad power on every path, providing clean, safe power (green), to your entire system.

Back-UPS Office award-winning features:

Integrates the Security of a Surge Suppressor with the Power of a UPS

Six outlets guard your hardware with full-time surge protection. Three of the six outlets provide instantaneous battery backup to keep your system from crashing in the event of brownout or blackout.

Internet Ready Fax/ Modem Protection

Back-UPS Office's built-in phone line/10 Base-T network cable surge protection prevents surges from damaging internal & external modems, motherboards, 10 Base-T lines, input/output cards, and other system components.

Convenient BlockSafe™ Outlet Spacing

Back-UPS Office's outlets are spaced to accommodate all size plugs, including large transformer blocks.

Master On/Off Switch

One switch conveniently controls power to entire connected system.

Electrical Wiring Fault Indicator Saves Trouble and Expense

Without a proper ground, most surge protection is useless. Back-UPS Office alerts you to wiring problems such as a missing ground and reversed polarity, two common miswirings which otherwise would require an electrician's visit to diagnose.

Circuit Breaker

Provides protection in the event of an overload or short circuit; no fuse, no hassle.

Check Battery Warning Prevents Downtime Before it Occurs

An LED signals when Back-UPS Office's internal self test finds the battery near the end of its life, giving you 6-8 weeks warning.

$25,000 Equipment Protection Policy

If your properly connected equipment is ever damaged by an AC surge, including surges due to lightning, APC will repair or replace our product and up to $25,000 of connected equipment for as long as you own your Back-UPS Office. (See policy for details.)

User Replaceable Batteries

Back-UPS Office has user replaceable batteries that can be be easily swapped out, saving time and expense: no need to return the UPS to the factory for service. Batteries last 3-6 years under normal usage.

2 Year Warranty

Unmatched reliability means you can purchase all APC products with confidence.

Choose the Right APC Protection

- For **advanced PC protection,** including automatic voltage regulation, CellGuard battery management and phone line/10BaseT protection, choose the Back-UPS Pro. For longer runtime choose a higher VA rating.

Back-UPS PRO Advanced PC Protection:

For Pentium, 486, Win 95, and Business Applications

Volt-Amp Rating	List Price	Runtime*
280PNP	$199	6 min.
420PNP	$339	8 min.
650PNP	$419	17 min.
1000**	$589	35 min.
1400**	$759	74 min.

- For **Multipath PC and peripheral protection,** choose new Back-UPS Office, featuring 6 outlets with guaranteed surge protection, 3 of which provide instantaneous battery backup, fax/modem protection, and BlockSafe™ outlet spacing for the accommodation of all size plugs and transformer blocks.

Back-UPS Office Multipath Protection:

For 386, entertainment, education & all peripherals

Volt-Amp Rating	List Price	Runtime
250	$179	10 min.

- For **Basic PC protection,** choose from the Back-UPS family (software not included).

Back-UPS Basic PC Protection:

For 286, 386, Entertainment, and education

Volt-Amp Rating	List Price	Runtime*
200	$119	-
280	$139	7 min.
400	$199	13 min.
450	$254	24 min.
600	$359	31 min.
900	$529	47 min.
1250	$689	75 min.

- **For Fileserver protection**, ask for our award-winning Smart-UPS® line (not shown).
- **For Datacenter protection**, ask about our Matrix-UPS line (not shown).
- **For hardware-only surge protection**, ask for APC's SurgeArrest™ line (not shown).

*Runtime shown is for typical Pentium desktop system and may vary with your actual load.
Note: Back-UPS 200 not recommended for Pentium systems
**Does not include FREE PowerChute Pro Power Management Software.

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Safety First

Power protection and data backup for your desktop

BY JOHN A. BUREK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS GOULD

PC users know that today's powerful desktop systems and giant hard drives let them store and access more data than ever before. Unfortunately, only the savvy ones recognize the flip side: When data-destroying phenomena such as power outages or hard drive failures occur, you have more to lose than ever.

Fortunately, effective defenses are within your reach. You can eliminate power-line dangers by installing an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) or surge suppressor, and regular backups to a tape-, disk-, or cartridge-based drive guarantee that there's always a copy of valuable data on hand. And since today's power- and data-protection markets teem with affordable products, there's no reason—or excuse—to compute without a net.

Electric Blues

PC hardware relies on steady power; interrupting that stream can precipitate events that range from annoying to downright disastrous. Power outages annihilate data in cache, and a power failure can scramble a hard drive's file-allocation table,

rendering the drive useless. Equipment attached to the public power supply is also prey to dangerous surges and spikes.

UPSs safeguard against all power anomalies. At heart, a UPS is a large battery that kicks in to supply your hardware when AC current fails or drops below a certain level. A UPS isn't intended to keep you running through extended power outages, but to give you enough time to save your work and shut down your PC in a civilized, safe manner.

You'll encounter three common types of UPSs: standby, line-interactive, and online. Standby units, like those found in Tripp Lite's BC Personal series, are the least expensive, sufficing for fairly stable power environments where blackouts are the main concern.

However, if brownouts or power dips are frequent in your area, line-interactive units, such as Para Systems' Minuteman Pro series, are probably a better choice: Their batteries boost inadequate power streams rather than transferring immediately to full battery backup. Online units, available from vendors such as Clary, Exide Electronics, and Liebert, offer users complete power filtration—at top-dollar prices—for the most unpredictable power environments and critical applications.

Note that standby UPSs take a few milliseconds to switch over to battery power; this can be risky for older PCs but is almost never a problem for today's desktops. The other two types, line-interactive and online, exhibit insignificant and zero switching times, respectively.

MinuteMan Pro 200

How much time you'll have before shutting down depends on the hardware you're powering and the load capacity of the UPS. UPS vendors rate (and price) their units according to a volt-ampere (VA) rating, and often provide a spec called full-load backup time (FLBT). The VA rating measures the maximum power capacity of the UPS, while the FLBT tells you approximately how long the UPS, if fully charged, will keep powering an equipment load equal to its VA rating.

Many UPS vendors offer models ranging from $100 units with ratings around 250VA—adequate for a pre-Pentium CPU and perhaps a 14-inch monitor—to safeguards rated at 1,000VA (1KVA) and well beyond, for protecting network servers or even entire LANs. Most vendors can provide you with matrices estimating a given UPS's runtime for a given load size.

Carrying the Load

To determine your power load, add the amperage of all components you want to attach to the UPS and multiply the sum by 120. Don't include printers, especially laser printers, in the calculation, and don't attach them to a UPS—though printers certainly require surge protection, power loss to a printer usually isn't catastrophic, and laser units can quickly drain or even overload a UPS's battery. Choose the VA level of your UPS with an eye for possible equipment additions or upgrades.

Any UPS should offer surge-suppression for the main power line—and some vendors, such as Advanced Power Conversion and Para Systems, guarantee to replace any equipment connected to their products that may be damaged by surges or spikes. However, power lines aren't the only vulnerable points—lightning hits can send spikes up through network or phone lines, destroying LAN adapters, modems, even motherboards.

As a result, you may want to seek out increasingly common phone- and network-line protection sockets, like those in Deltec's PowerRite Plus and Pro series UPSs. Other useful features to look for are indicators that point out wiring problems, and audio and visual alarms that trip when the UPS goes to battery backup. You should also make sure the UPS offers enough input sockets to connect all the components you want to protect.

Home users pressed for space might want to opt for a space-saving solution, such as Kanrich Electronics' World's Smallest UPS—an internal 400VA or 600VA unit that fits into a 5.25-inch drive bay—or APC's Back-UPS Office, a 250VA UPS and surge suppressor no bigger than a large power strip.

Compared with the cost of replacing pricey computer equipment, a UPS is an inexpensive, effective insurance policy. However, if your budget is below even an economical UPS, a good-quality surge suppressor is a minimal must.

Ignore $10 convenience-store power strips, which will

(continued on page 210)

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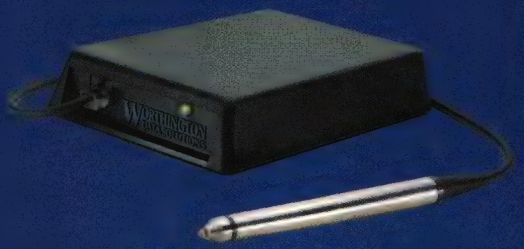

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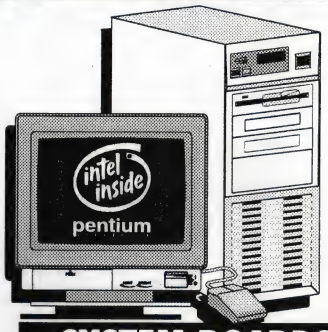

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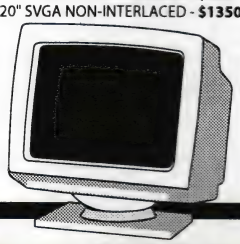

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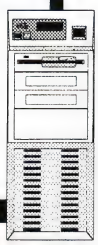

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(continued from page 206)

only give you a false sense of security. Robust surge suppressors have fuses that break power connections in the event of a severe overvoltage. Other series-design suppressors transform overvoltages into heat. And $15 to $20 standalone line protectors—inexpensive modules that quell surges on phone and network lines—are indispensable for protecting against backdoor surges.

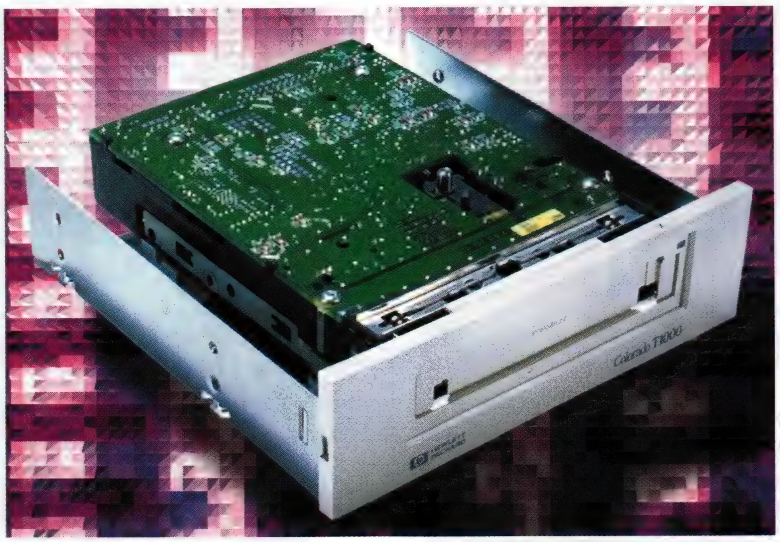
Tale of the Tape

Power threats aren't the only danger to your data. Hard drives don't last forever, and data loss can occur for reasons ranging from user error to simple hardware failure. Thus, keeping an up-to-date, restorable copy of your important data is a critical—but often overlooked—task.

You can split the current huge array of backup devices into two categories, delineated by whether they back up to tape cartridges or to a disk or encased disk. Tape drives are the most cost-efficient means of backup. The least-expensive drives write to quarter-inch tape (QIC) cartridges. QIC tapes and drives come in a confusing array of capacities and types differentiated by unhelpful numeric monikers (QIC-80 tapes, for instance, hold 120MB of uncompressed data). Moreover, tapes created in one QIC format often aren't readable by drives of a different format—or sometimes by drives of the same format from a different vendor.

QIC-speak has been further complicated by capacity-enhancing advances such as QIC-Wide tapes and drives (which use wider and longer tape to boost storage capacities) and 3M/Imation's successful Travan technology, whose trapezoidal cartridges offer greater capacities.

While some of this confusion lives on, many major tape drive vendors, including HP Colorado Memory Systems, Seagate, and Exabyte, have focused on Travan technology, which has simplified matters by offering vendor cross-compatibility and, often, backward read and sometimes write compatibility with a few common QIC formats.



Colorado T1000

Ignore $10 convenience-store power strips, which will only give you a false sense of security.

With mainstream hard drives now commonly packing 1GB or more, a high-capacity Travan drive such as HP Colorado's T1000 may be your best bet. Travan tapes and drives currently come in four formats—TR-1 through TR-4—with respective native capacities of 400MB, 800MB, 1.6GB, and 4GB; the tapes cost slightly more or less than $30 each, depending on format.

Backup vendors often inflate tape drives' capacities by assuming the data on the tape will be compressed, thus optimistically estimating a compression ratio of 2 to 1—advertising a TR-1 cartridge, for example, as holding 800MB. Your ratios may vary—on the lower side—so always gauge a drive by its native or uncompressed capacity.

When choosing a tape drive, look for one that can store your entire hard drive to a single piece of media, which will lessen the chore of backing up. And before settling on any tape drive, query the vendor thoroughly on compatibility issues—particularly if your plans include accessing archived tapes created in another format. Iomega's Ditto 3200, for instance, is a Travan TR-3 drive that can read and write to TR-2 and TR-3 media, but can only read, not write, TR-1 media.

Many internal tape drives attach to your PC via the floppy controller; external units connect via the parallel port. If you're looking for high per-cartridge capacities and a faster interface, 4mm DAT drives such as APS's HyperDAT Pro use SCSI interfaces and can pack 4GB of uncompressed data per tape—but the drives themselves will set you back $800 or more. If you need higher per-tape capacities, you might consider much more expensive SCSI-based solutions such as 8mm DAT or digital linear tape (DLT).

Saving to Disk

Tape media's massive capacities and cheap per-megabyte cost make it a bargain for backup, but tape drives lack speed; backing up large drives can take hours. Disk-based solutions combine fast random access with data safety,

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though at a higher per-megabyte cost.

Iomega's immensely popular $199 Zip drive packs 100MB of data onto a $20 floppy-sized disk and is excellent for backing up small hard drives and exchanging files—although you'll need a stack of Zip disks to back up a 1GB drive. Iomega's portable Jaz drive ($599-list for the external version, $499 for the internal) uses a larger, more expensive ($99) 1GB cartridge better suited to backing up today's hard drives. The Jaz's fast access time also makes it excellent for multimedia applications such as motion video.

SyQuest's internal and external EZ135 offers slightly larger 135MB disks, and the company's $299-list EZFlyer 230, a removable-cartridge drive, aims to steal some of Zip's thunder with 230MB cartridges that sell for about $30 each. And earlier this year, 3M/Imation announced yet another competing format, but with a twist: Its LS-120 disk holds 120MB of data, but compatible drives—the first of which showed up in some Compaq Deskpro models—are backward-compatible with 1.44MB and 720K floppies.

Meanwhile, falling prices on CD-R drives (well under $1,000 at present) and cheap write-once media ($6 to $10 for a 650MB disc) make CD-R a cost-effective solution for users whose backup needs include permanent archiving of data. Those looking for reusable backup media may want to consider phase-change (PD or PD/CD) drives, which use fast, rewritable 650MB cartridges; some, like Toray's PhaseWriter Dual, even double as CD-ROM readers. PD cartridges are only readable by other PD drives, however—although enhancements are expected that will soon boost the media's storage capacity.

Finally, magneto-optical (MO) drives have traditionally offered near-bulletproof, rewritable backup to 230MB, 650MB, 1.3GB, and 2.6GB optical disks. The optical media is reasonably priced (2.6GB disks can cost less than $100), but you'll pay a high startup cost for the drive itself—especially for drives usable with the higher-capacity media. MO performance is also relatively slow compared with other disk formats.

Toray PhaseWriter

Data Watchdogs

Regardless of whether you use your home PC for work, fun, or a bit of both, chances are it was a significant expenditure, and one you'd like to protect from damage. It's also a safe bet that you value the data on your desktop just as highly. Place your trust in a well-chosen UPS and frequent data backups, and you'll protect both your investments—your hardware and your time.

Shopping Tips

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) is your best, most cost-effective insurance against data loss and hardware damage due to power failure or surges. A unit rated at 400VA or more should provide adequate reserve—that is, several minutes' worth of safe shutdown time—for most desktop PCs.

A line-interactive or online UPS costs more, but reacts quicker and provides more power-smoothing protection than a standby UPS.

Don't bother plugging your printer into your UPS: It's more sturdy than your PC when it comes to surviving a blackout, and laser printers are energy hogs.

Stop pretending you can copy files to floppies or reinstall all your software. The only true solution is a backup device for your hard drive. Cheap but antique quarter-inch cartridge (QIC) tape drives are rapidly yielding to the newer, higher-capacity Travan tape formats: TR-1 (400MB uncompressed capacity), TR-2 (800MB), TR-3 (1.6GB), and TR-4 (4GB).

Tape vendors often advertise media at double its native capacity (a TR-3 drive as 3.2GB, for example), making optimistic assumptions about backup software's data compression. To be on the safe side, base your purchases on native size. And look for a drive that can back up your whole hard drive to a single cartridge; avoiding tiresome swapping during backups.

You can choose from a variety of internal and external backup devices. Many of the former share your PC's floppy-drive interface and bolt into a drive bay; the latter use SCSI (the technology of choice for high-end backup solutions such as 4mm DAT) or relatively slow parallel-port connections.

We've all been there. The moment you realize a week's worth of work is irretrievably lost in the hard drive abyss, you find a new kind of "religion," vowing never, ever to let your valuable data go unprotected again. For a week or so, you keep your promise. Then old habits creep back and, once again, you're vulnerable.

Weep no more with the Panasonic® PD, NEW! from Quantex. In its continuing partnership with the industry's brightest stars, Quantex brings you the latest and most reliable optical data storage and retrieval technology available on the market today—Panasonic's NEW! 650 MB rewritable, removable, totally optical PD.

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Why is everybody talking about this NEW PD technology? PD, which stands for "Phase-change Dual," is a new and extremely clever technology. Clever because it uses a laser instead of an electromagnet to record your data on a special optical cartridge. Since it's not magnetic, it is unaffected by head crashes and uncontrolled magnetic fields that can destroy data. This guarantees that your data is safe. Safer than with any other backup system available today.

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How much will it hold? 650 MB. That's the capacity to hold the contents of most hard drives. Or to off-load several large and commonly used applications onto a single PD cartridge – not a problem. It's also enough space to store huge graphics files, photo libraries, audio-visual

...Smile.
Quantex brings you the PANASONIC® PD.

applications, hard drive-hogging Internet downloads, databases, you name it. And, if you're a two-PC family or a multi-PC business, count on your PD cartridge to form a bridge between your machines.

The storage capacity of one Panasonic PD cartridge is equal to the capacity of 464 3.5" floppy disks

How long will it live? A PD cartridge will be around for a good long time — at least 30 years. That's 6 times longer than most traditional media. And it allows up to 500,000 rewrites too! You can save valuable data on your PD's removable cartridge, throw it into your lock box, and without a doubt, it'll be there whenever you need it. Tax records, photo collections, your company's balance sheet, the manuscript for your first book. Whatever is precious to you is safe on a Panasonic PD cartridge.

How much does this storage cost? Less than 5 cents per MB—not that you can really put a price tag on your data. When you compare under 5 cents with the cost to back up massive amounts of data on other backup storage devices, there's just no contest.

PD storage + CD-ROM in one drive!

The Panasonic PD looks just like a half-height 5.25" drive, but has a tray-loading mechanism that allows cartridge-enclosed optical disks as well as CD-ROM

The PD drive uses the same tray to read a CD or read/write to a PD cartridge.

disks to be used in a single drive. Put a disk into the drive and the drive automatically knows whether it's a PD cartridge or a CD, and treats it accordingly. Smart! You're only using one drive bay to handle two valuable functions. Economical, too!

Big muscles, but no bigger than an over-sized floppy. Just the right size to travel, the PD cartridge is about twice the thickness of a 5.25" floppy, and easy to transport in your brief case or an overnight mail pouch. Durable too. In fact, just about shock-proof!

Better than a string around your finger, we've included Seagate Backup™ software. The biggest problem most of us have when it comes to back-up is remembering to do it. Seagate comes to the rescue with complete data protection for Windows® 95. This back-up scheduling and management software allows for unattended back-ups, and is easy to set up, easy to use, and easy to love.

Guaranteed "backward compatibility" with DVD! Any PD cartridge you use to save your critical data will be readable by new storage and retrieval devices — like the upcoming Panasonic DVD products that are sure to become the new CD-ROM standard. And that's a promise.

PC MAGAZINE EDITORS' CHOICE™
March 12, 1996
Panasonic PD/CD-ROM

"Our Editors' Choice is the PD/CD-ROM Drive from Panasonic. This new generation phase-change writer offers a capacity of 650MB per cartridge—enough for most users to back up their entire hard disk—plus the ability to read standard CD-ROM disks at quad speed. This is an elegant back-up/storage/CD-ROM solution."
--PC Magazine

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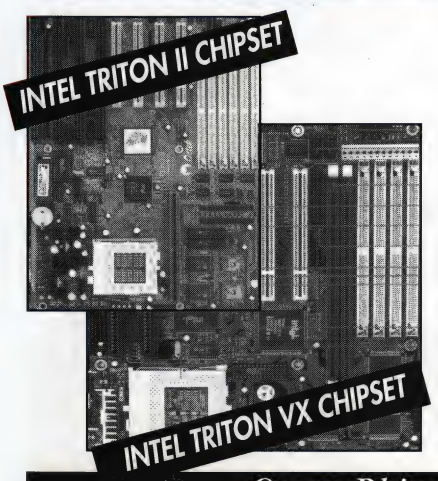

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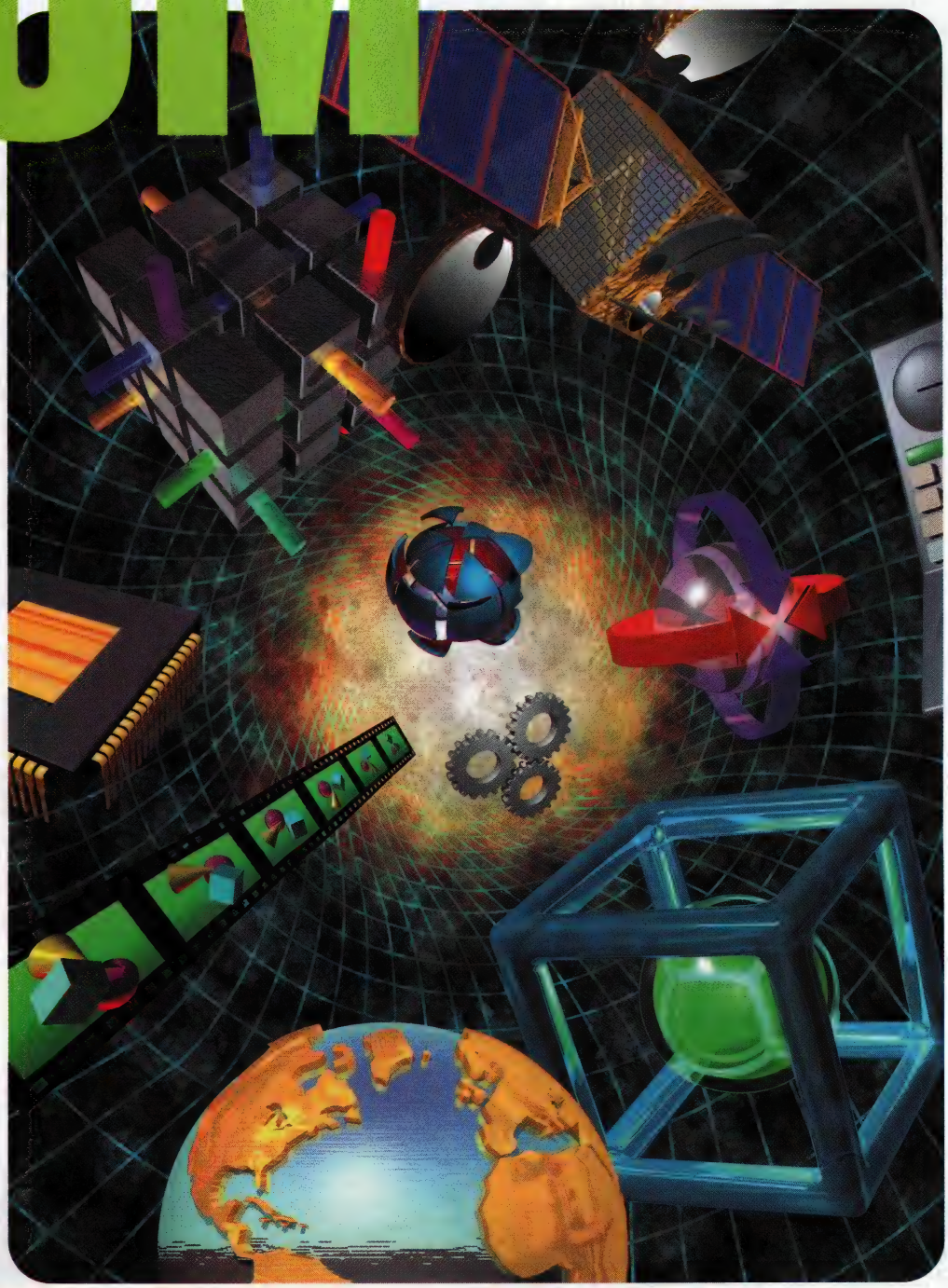


ILLUSTRATION BY TIM ALT

The realm of multimedia extends far beyond familiar titles such as Encarta and Myst. It encompasses everything from learning a new language to exploring human anatomy, from designing your own comic books to planning a vacation. Of course, the best multimedia lives up to its name through innovative applications of such diverse elements as text; high-resolution graphics; animation; digital music, speech, and video; and most important, interactivity.

BY LANCE ELKO

Although some early titles on CD-ROM were hampered by difficult installations, clunky performance, and relatively lightweight content, the last two years have seen considerable progress on all fronts. Windows 95 and its Autoplay feature in particular have made most installation problems a dim memory, while competition in the marketplace continues to drive software publishers toward ever-better content and production values.

Regardless of your family makeup, you can find plenty of high-quality programming that will engage, inform, and entertain any age, interest, or taste. Here's a sampling of what's out there.

Peterson Multimedia Guides: North American Birds

Home Matters

Homeowners know that houses need as much TLC as any other family member. And the Home Improvement Encyclopedia from Books That Work can help keep everyone safe and happy. All types of maintenance checkups and repair are covered, with professional tips and monthly reminders on items to be cleaned, inspected, or serviced. The program is also loaded with useful animations and features ranging from Web links to price estimators for everything from drywall and paint to lumber and concrete.

Once you tire of pouring money into domestic repairs, your thoughts inevitably turn to remodeling or perhaps to designing your dream house. Broderbund's 3D Home Architect 2 is the place to start. This feature-filled program uses a large toolbox and CAD engine (don't be intimidated—it's powerful and detailed, but easy and forgiving) to provide 3-D perspectives from any angle you choose. A material list and furniture library are other nice touches. If you're not sure where to start, use the included plans and modify them to your liking.

In time, you may want to get out of the house and check out your neighbors—the feathered kind that perch on tree limbs outside your window. Peterson Multimedia Guides: North American Birds from Houghton-Mifflin Interactive will make the necessary introductions, with information on more than 1,000 species. By selecting a geographic region, visual likeness, season, habitat, relative size, and color, you can quickly identify nearly any avis passing by.

Happy Trails

Your home PC can make life on the road easier for you and your family with a variety of useful travel and mapping programs that do far more than display route numbers and interstate exits. DeLorme's AAA Map 'n' Go and Rand McNally's TripMaker 1997 Edition are two excellent choices. Both offer trip-planning advice and maps with as much or as little detail as you like. You can set beginning and ending locations with stopovers, and select the shortest, quickest, preferred, or scenic routes. Completing the programs' user profiles will yield even more planning detail, such as lodgings that will accept Rover. The DeLorme title additionally boasts AAA locations, campgrounds, attractions, and more; while TripMaker provides interactive maps to 20 national parks and personalized links to travel info on Rand McNally's Web site.

If you need even more detailed directions, you may want to invest in a street-mapping program. You can choose from several good titles, including Microsoft's Automap Streets, Philips' Metro Navigator (which offers detailed maps for eight major U.S. metropolitan areas), Pro CD's Select Street Atlas, and Rand McNally's Street Finder 1997 Edition, which interfaces with the company's TripMaker program.

Europe-bound travelers looking to brush up on their communications skills may want to take along the Berlitz Think & Talk 2.0 from The Learning Co. This disc runs on Windows and Mac platforms, and uses newly added voice-recognition capability in conjunction with the well-known Berlitz instruction method to teach basic courses in conversational French, German, Italian, or Spanish. Other features include 50 language lessons, 150 real-life situations, and an easily accessible 10,000-word dictionary offering definitions and pronunciations.

Interactive Instruction

Of course, your multimedia PC is an excellent teacher—and the curriculum covers just about every subject imaginable. Skilled guitarists, for instance, will pick up some tasty blues riffs from Play Music's Play Blues Guitar with Keith Wyatt, while those just starting out can cut their chops on the eight guitar classics (including "Blackbird," "Hey, Joe," and "Sweet Home Alabama") found on Ubi Soft's Classic Rock Guitar, Volume 1. Learning to play the keyboard is also made easier by Midisoft's Play Piano program or by Yamaha's PC Music Studio, a combination of the company's

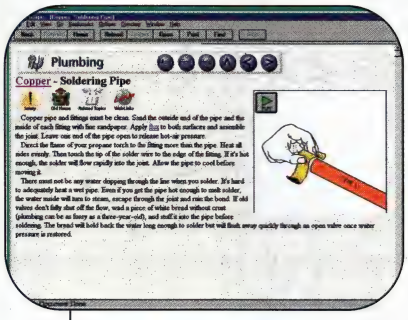
Play Blues Guitar with Keith Wyatt

PSR220 portable keyboard and Voyetra Technologies' Discovering Keyboards CD-ROM.

Aspiring cartoonists, meanwhile, should check out Diamar's How to Draw Cartoons, which teaches traditional drawing essentials using 50 individual lessons, hundreds of step-by-step illustrations, and dozens of animations and video clips. Diamar also offers two instructional titles for golfers produced in conjunction with Golf Tips magazine: Golf Tips: Breaking 100 and Golf Tips: Breaking 90.

Users looking to improve their typing skills will get plenty of assistance from Mindscape's Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing 4.0 or Typing Tutor Deluxe CD from Individual Software. College-bound students can also use their PCs to prepare for the SATs with programs from Chancellor & Dean, The Learning Co., Princeton Review, and ReviewWare.

Another formidable task made easy is found in WinWay Resume 4.0, which offers hundreds of sample resumes from many fields, access to job sources via the Internet, a multimedia-based interview simulation, salary-negotiation guidance, and the AutoWriter, which melds your input with that of the program's expertise to produce a first-rate resume.



Home Improvement Encyclopedia

You can even find a wide range of interactive CD-ROMs that will help you use your computer more efficiently. CRT Multimedia, DiscoverWare, MindQ, Soft One, and ViaGrafix all offer quality titles devoted to specific PC applications and programs.

In Search Of...

Today's multimedia software can also be your ticket to a world of exploration. For example, A.D.A.M. Software's A.D.A.M. The Inside Story, 1997 Edition, will take you on a fascinating journey inside the human body with new 3-D tours of the skeleton, heart, and lungs using material from the National Library of Medicine's Visible Human Project. The disc also lets users continually update content via the Web.

If you're looking for a bit more action, Discovery Channel Multimedia's Wings: Saigon to Persian Gulf looks back on advances made in air combat over the last 20 years with a database of more than 500 aircraft and a flight simulator section that re-creates three historical missions. For a truly out-of-this-world experience, check out FlagTower's The Unexplained. Presented in the company's pioneering documentary format, this disc features over three hours of sights and sounds exploring such unearthly topics as UFOs, Mysterious Beings, Ghosts, and Spirits.

Paul Cézanne: Portrait of My World

Those whose tastes tend toward more terrestrial sights may want to pick up Corbis's Paul Cézanne: Portrait of My World, which explores the work of this seminal French artist through five virtual 3-D environments, scholarly analyses of the artist's work and influences, and reproductions of 152 Cézanne works (and more than 110 by other artists). For culture closer to home, you can join in on the celebration of an American institution with 150 Years of America's Smithsonian from MacMillian Digital USA. This two-disc set explores more than 300 national treasures from all 16 branches of the Smithsonian with 500 graphics, 35 minutes of video, and 60 minutes of narration.

The Lighter Side

Not all software should be practical. Sure, games are always entertaining, but don't overlook other titles that are fun to explore on their own terms.

If you yearn for the '60s, don't miss Interplay's Pete Townshend Presents Tommy: The Interactive Adventure Now and Then. Interspersing images, animated sequences, video clips of performances, studio and live recordings, and interviews, Tommy reveals nearly anything and everything you want to know about the album and the tours—as well as the subsequent film and theatrical stagings.

If Tommy smacks of nostalgic overkill to those who missed the Woodstock years, Fox Interactive's The Simpsons' Cartoon Studio might have more appeal. This disc is a fun-filled diversion that lets you create your own Simpsons episodes. Developed with series creator Matt Groening, Cartoon Studio presents a toolkit of 17 characters from the show; 36 backgrounds; and hundreds of props, animated sequences, visual effects, and sound effects.

A completely different kind of art is found in Calliope Media's ScruTiny in the Great Round. A work as unusual as its name, this award-winning program is a classic example of multimedia as an art form. Using a fusion of multimedia elements, the themes of ScruTiny are universal archetypes and dichotomies (birth, death, love, war, darkness, light, etc.). With its visual collage and layered ethereal sound, ScruTiny evokes a moody, sensual world that pulls you in. Those who love art should explore this fascinating work.

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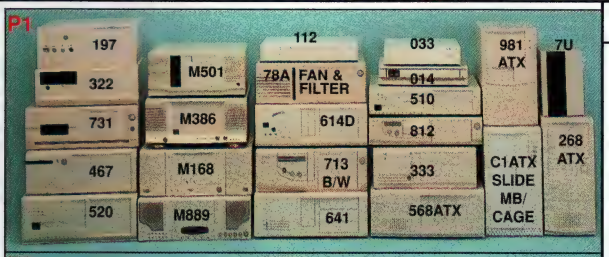

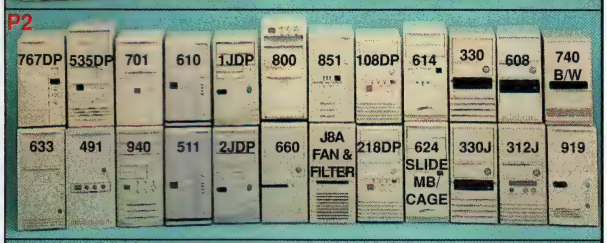

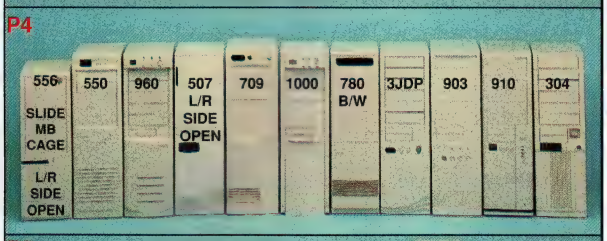

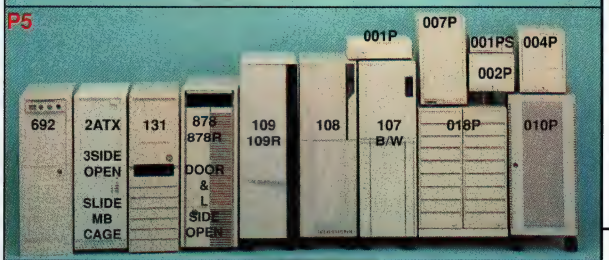

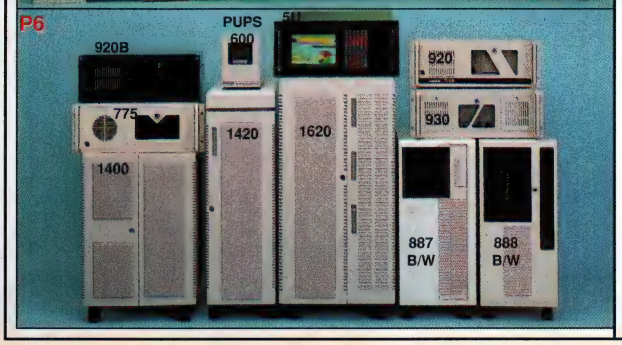

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Reading Between the Lines

For the youngest set, computer reading programs cover a wide range of skills. Starting with basic ABCs, these series evolve through phonics, and ultimately build comprehension and grammar skills.

At the early levels, The Learning Co.'s exceptional Read, Write, & Type teaches kids about letter sounds and shows them how to type on a keyboard. Once kids are alphabet-confident, the next phase includes programs such as Davidson's Reading Blaster Jr. and Reading Blaster, which respectively cover basic phonics and word recognition.

Another reading powerhouse is the Reader Rabbit series, also from The Learning Co. These popular titles come in three progressive versions that begin with phonics and lead kids through grammar. The company also offers Reading Interactive Journey, which combines onscreen activities with actual books included with the program, to help develop good reading skills. Finally, for engaging word activities and some manic animation, 7th Level's The Great Word Adventure features a healthy selection of games, puzzles, and songs, as well as the voice of popular comedian Howie Mandel.

Interactive books—programs that read stories out loud to children and offer colorful illustrations or animation—also figure prominently in the early-reading category. Popular interactive books, typically based on familiar children's stories, include Davidson's Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, Disney's Toy Story Animated Storybook, Houghton Mifflin Interactive's Polar Express, Living Books' Dr. Seuss's ABCs, and Penguin Electronics' The Escape of Marvin the Ape.

Grammar Schoolhouse Rock

For accomplished readers, more advanced programs exercise language and comprehension skills. Creative Wonders' Grammar Schoolhouse Rock and Davidson's Grammar Games help kids differentiate between adjectives and nouns by offering cartoon characters and exercises that ask kids to identify those sentence parts. Schoolhouse Rock also features popular grammar videos from the '70s Saturday-morning TV show.

Finally, to help kids understand what they've read, Broderbund's Reading Galaxy serves up compelling stories from well-known books such as *Charlotte's Web*, and then builds up comprehension skills by having children answer a series of questions in a hilarious interplanetary game-show environment.

Making the Grade

It's not easy to make math drills fun, but Broderbund's Math Workshop, Davidson's Math Blaster, and The Learning Co.'s Math Rabbit all do their best with creative math-oriented puzzles, amusing cartoon animations, arcade action, and certificates of achievement. Davidson's titles begin with Math Blaster Jr. for early mathematics; progress through the grade levels with Math Blaster 1—In Search of Spot, Math Blaster 2—Secret of the Lost City, and Math Blaster Mystery: The Great Brain Robbery; and culminate with Alge-Blaster 3.

ChemLab

A new breed of software covers entire curriculums for grade levels. This includes Knowledge Adventure's excellent JumpStart programs for preschool, kindergarten, first grade, and second grade; and Sierra's Adi series that covers English, mathematics, and science for second and third, and fourth and fifth grades.

Elective Courses

As you might expect, some multimedia programs defy easy categorization. Philips Media's Cybercrafts: Fun with Electronics and Digital Lab kits, for instance, are entertaining courses in basic engineering for youngsters ages 8 and up, in which a CD-ROM tutorial is combined with a simulated circuitboard and more than 100 working components. Corel's ChemLab, meanwhile, is a remarkable chemistry laboratory on disc that lets future scientists mix up virtual chemicals in preselected formulas or by using random experimentation.

Beethoven Lives Upstairs

Young maestros can also take their pick of an orchestra's worth of titles: BMG's Beethoven Lives Upstairs, IBM's Kid Riffs, and Theatrix's Julliard Music Adventure all offer first-rate interactive musical games.

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grams let kids produce artworks—and even their own movies.

Broderbund's Kid Pix, Davidson's Kid Works Deluxe, and Fractal Design's Dabbler 2, for example, all encourage self-expression through painting, while Davidson's Multimedia Studio and Microsoft's 3D MovieMaker let aspiring directors combine videos and pictures with sound.

Young history buffs will also delight in Grolier Interactive's How Would You Survive, a compelling title that gives kids a feel for what it was like to live among the ancient Egyptians, Vikings, and Aztecs.

Night School

Finally, for a new and different look at space, there's DK Multimedia's Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Space and Universe, Maris's Discover Astronomy, and Voyager's Invisible Universe. Discover Astronomy features some of the most exhilarating sections of Maris's popular RedShift, without the complex interface or space-mapping features. Invisible Universe is hosted by astrophysicist Dr. Fiorella Terenzi, who leads you on a tour of the cosmos. Between stars, galaxies, and black holes, you'll hear poetry and music that was influenced by the sounds of the galaxy.

Information at Your Fingertips

Reference CD-ROMs are a high-tech response to those boring and weighty volumes of yesteryear. Besides costing much less than their paper peers and requiring a fraction of the shelf space, CD-ROM references use sophisticated search mechanisms to locate needed information easily. They also enhance onscreen articles with animations, video, and sound to let you see the body's circulatory system in action and hear stirring orations.

There are even reference discs made specifically for kids. For instance, DK Multimedia's My First Incredible, Amazing Dictionary provides definitions and spoken pronunciations for 17,000 words and has more than 1,000 illustrations. You'll also find several high-quality children's encyclopedias, including The Learning Co.'s Ultimate Children's Encyclopedia and Random House Kid's Encyclopedia from Knowledge Adventure, both of which were designed for use by kids ages 7 through 12. In addition to its 28,000 articles, the Ultimate Children's Encyclopedia integrates a dictionary, biographical dictionary, thesaurus, and atlas. The Kid's Encyclopedia, meanwhile, contains 4,000 articles (1,000 of which offer spoken narration), and 250 animations and movie clips. Apple's Earth Explorer teaches kids about important environmental issues with 400 articles, puzzles, and photos.

3-D Atlas

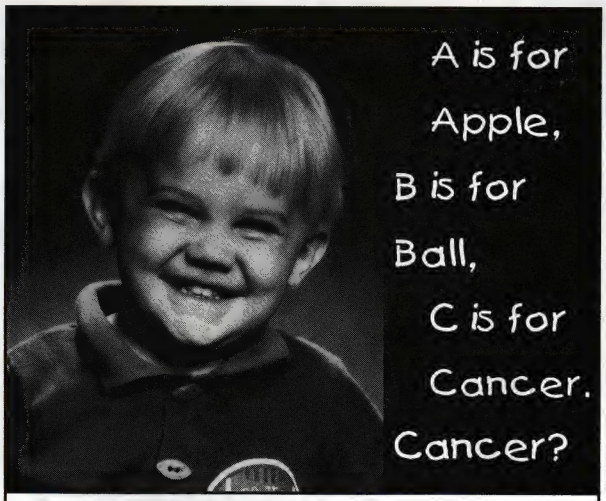
The best-known general-reference CD-ROM encyclopedias are the Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Microsoft Encarta, and SoftKey's Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia. All three contain vast numbers of articles along with impressive multimedia content. Moreover, the latest versions of these electronic references offer slick search tools, and links to the Internet and other online services.

Compton's ondisc help is provided by actor Patrick Stewart, while an innovative feature lets you bring together video and sound elements into easy-to-create multimedia presentations. Encarta offers an online update for its encyclopedia. The 1997 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia boasts the most extensive atlas in the bunch, with more than 1,200 maps as well as a new Interactivities section that features seven topics with links to related articles in the encyclopedia.

Speaking of atlases, you'll find that several of the latest dedicated atlases on CD-ROM present sociological and economic data in thematic colored maps that also offer charts with the usual boundaries, cities, and terrain. Such features let you compare population densities or GNP across countries. Popular choices in this category include Creative Wonders' 3D Atlas, which has some impressive fly-by video; DK Multimedia's Cartopedia; and Rand McNally's Quick Reference Atlas.

Besides having encyclopedias and atlases, no home should be without a comprehensive medical reference. IVI Publishing's Mayo Clinic Family Health 1996 Edition, for instance, covers family health issues as well as fitness, medicine, and sports. In addition to addressing a wide range of health-related topics, the program analyzes various symptoms, and provides a complete guide to prescription and nonprescription drugs. It also gives you a place to store medical information.

For a touch of culture, you'll find an entire library's worth of literature on Corel's World's Greatest Classic Books. This single disc contains the complete text of 3,500 novels, short stories, plays, poems, and historical and religious documents. Multimedia Shakespeare from Thynx (formerly Bureau of Electronic Publishing) sells for less than $15, and features the complete works of William Shakespeare with 37 plays, five poems, and 154 sonnets. Both discs also offer powerful search capabilities that let you locate specific words and phrases; the Corel CD also searches by authors and titles.



Although cancer is a very grown-up disease, thousands of children like Adam learn all about it each year when they're diagnosed with one of its deadly forms.

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Today's PC gamers can choose from thousands of titles, and though there may be no shortage of second-rate software out there, the good stuff just keeps getting better. With the latest technology making it easier to run games, and making games run faster, PC users have every reason to grab a joystick and take a ride to anywhere.

Flight simulators are making a particularly strong showing this year, with fully rendered 3-D graphics that make both terrain and aircraft look incredibly realistic on a fast Pentium PC. Some military flight sims can be quite detailed, however, so unless you're a fully qualified fighter pilot, be prepared to spend a lot

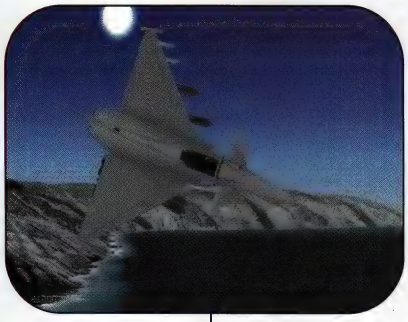
ILLUSTRATION BY THE BIG PIXEL

By John Marrin

of time with the manual.

If you'd rather hover than go supersonic, there are a growing number of helicopter sims. Would-be chopper jockeys can't miss with Interactive Magic's realistic Apache or its Russian helicopter sequel, HIND. AH-64D Longbow from Electronic Arts is also a great sim for gamers looking for realism, though NovaLogic's Commanche has more of an arcade feel and is better for players who want to jump right into the action.

You'll also find a full runway's worth of jet fighter flight sims. Spectrum Holobyte's Top Gun and Sierra On-Line's Silent Thunder may not be as realistic as some of their competitors, but both get novice pilots into the hot seat faster than you can say "Bandit at two o'clock!" Top Gun has you flying F-14 Navy Tomcats from a carrier; Silent Thunder puts you in the cockpit of the venerable Army A-10 Warthog, the ultimate tank killer. For the seasoned jet vet, Ocean of America's EF2000 offers the latest in high-tech fixed-wing aircraft. This NATO fighter jet has enough high-tech gadgets to stop any menace short of a UFO.



EF2000

Speaking of UFOs, gamers who prefer to defy gravity in the vacuum of space should check out X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter from LucasArts, which lets players go head to head in their favorite *Star Wars* craft. On the other side of the galaxy, Wing Commander IV, the space shoot 'em up-cum-soap opera, stars Mark Hamill and Malcolm McDowell fightin' and flyin' to save the universe.

Turf Battles

For landlubbers who need to feel the ground beneath their feet, MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries from Activision adds money and resource management to the gritty battles of high-tech mechanized robots. Gamers who prefer not to hide in a mech's steel armor will get their blood pumping with more traditional first-person shooters such as Quake from ID Software. This time the creators of Doom have rendered the gory shootfest in full 3-D with a soundtrack by Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails.

Demolition Derby

Duke Nukem 3D from FormGen adds great graphics, strip bars, and humor with lots of 'tude to a first-person shooter. No surprises here: Duke is out to save Earth from mutant aliens, but his ego and good looks alone won't be enough to get him through alive. Meanwhile, Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II, the sequel to LucasArts' Dark Forces, throws in a lightsabre and some Jedi powers to aid Kyle Katalin in his quest to become a Jedi Knight. Katalin hacks and laser-blasts his way past a multitude of new baddies and must choose between the Dark Side and The Force. Decisions, decisions...

Duke Nukem 3D

All Sorts of Sports

Those with the need for speed won't be disappointed by this year's selection in racing games. Indy Car II from Papyrus should satisfy gamers who want more of a realistic racing sim complete with tire, suspension, and gearbox adjustments. Sega's Daytona USA, meanwhile, is more of an arcade NASCAR racing game, good for a quick thrill. Whiplash from Interplay has the usual four-wheeled cars, but the twisting, looping tracks are anything but routine. If you crave a bit more adrenaline-pumping smashing and bashing, Psygnosis' Sony PlayStation hit, Destruction Derby, has come to the PC. On the more esoteric side, Rocket Jockeys from Rocket Science has you saddle up a primitive rocket (just like Slim Pickens in *Dr. Strangelove*) for a totally turbocharged race. You steer by shooting grappling hooks into poles, walls, your opponents, and so on. Besides racing, you can partake in team games such as polo.

VR Soccer 96

One-on-one 3-D fighting games have traditionally been the raison d'être of console platforms like the

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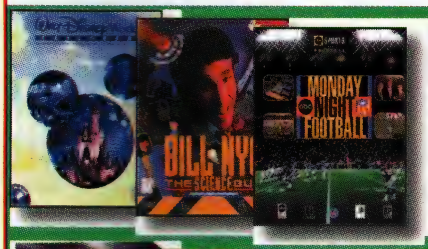

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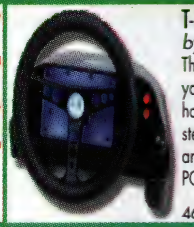

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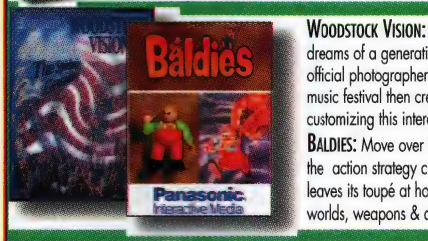

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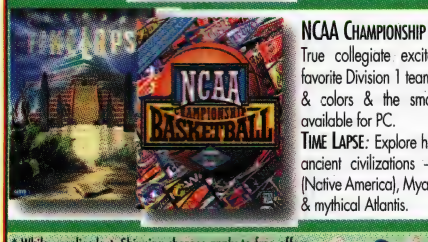

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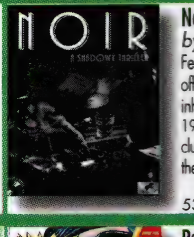

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Nintendo and Sega systems, but PC owners no longer need be envious. Sony's Battle Arena Toshinden and Sega's Virtua Fighter, both great fighting games, have arrived on the PC circuit with all the sword-swinging, high-kicking one-on-one action you can handle.

For hot action on ice, Electronic Arts' NHL Hockey 96 has all the slap-shot action and unreal 3-D graphics you would expect from the leader in sports sims. The '97 version looks even better. (Hint: You can smell the ice.)

Soccer fever is here to stay. Interplay's VR

One-on-one 3-D fighting games have traditionally been the raison d'être of console platforms like the Nintendo and Sega systems.

Soccer 96 and Electronic Art's FIFA Soccer '96 both offer amazing 3-D graphics for a turf-shredding good time. And, if you didn't get your fill of track and field in Atlanta this summer, Decathlon from Interactive Magic should keep you jumping, running, and throwing until the Games land in Sydney, Australia.

Speaking of the Olympics, after the Dream Team steamrolled the competition, can March Madness be far away? GTE's NCAA Shootout will keep hoopsters dribbling and dunking well into next season and beyond.

GAMES

Controlling the Action

When you're playing a fast-paced game, staying in control counts for everything. Fortunately for PC gamers, manufacturers are at last recognizing that different games demand different types of controllers. Joysticks are no longer the only alternatives to keyboards and mice; recent months have seen the introduction of new hybrid controllers that give gamers more ways to run, duck, shoot, race, kick, and fly than ever before.

SpaceTec's SpaceOrb 360 takes the prize as the controller with the funkiest design. The SpaceOrb is built to be held in both hands, with the right operating its six buttons while the left grips a spherical knob that controls speed and vectoring. With the knob, gamers can control all six axes of movement: slide right and left, turn left and right, move forward and back, jump, crouch, look up and down, and roll (perfect for flying games like Descent).

Logitech's Wingman Warrior, meanwhile, places a control knob on a joystick's base that lets you turn left and right as fast as the knob will spin. By combining the spin control with the joystick, you can strafe enemies in your favorite 3-D flight-fight while running circles around them, as you can with the SpaceOrb. The Wingman Warrior also has a hat switch (critical for looking around the cockpit in flying games) and six buttons.

First Person Gaming's Gaming Assassin looks like a trackball but is specifically designed to control the view in 3-D games like Doom or Duke Nukem 3D. The three-button Assassin plugs into your joystick and controls left and right turns as well as up and down glances, but leaves forward, backward, and strafing movements to your joystick.

Even Microsoft has jumped into the joystick arena. The company's SideWinder 3D Pro offers a large selection of controls, including a hat switch and four buttons on the handle, as well as a throttle control and four more buttons on the base. The SideWinder also lets you twist the handle for quick turning in 3-D games like MechWarrior 2. Depending on your game port, the joystick can operate in digital mode for faster response or emulate a CH Products Flightstick in analog mode.

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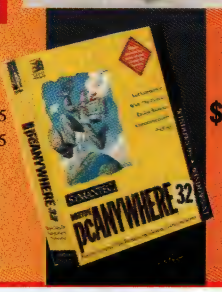

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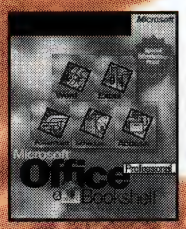

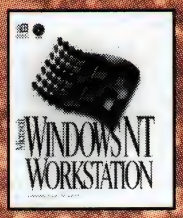

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Civilization II

The Best-Laid Plans

Who among us hasn't wondered what it would be like to rule the world? Well, now you can with Civilization II from MicroProse, which lets you determine the fate of the human species—from the origins of society all the way to the space age.

Interplay's Conquest of the New World lets gamers colonize the "new continent" to their heart's content, while Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness from Blizzard Entertainment has more of a fantasy feel to it and pits the goblinlike Orcs against humans in a military and civilization-building strategy game.

If fast-paced tactical strategy is more your bag, Virgin Interactive's Command and Conquer: Red Alert offers head-to-head play with other gamers via the Internet, new battle units (including medics and nasty land mines), and all the furious action of the original Command and Conquer. For players who'd rather not wade through dead bodies, Lemmings: Paintball from Psygnosis has you guide the cutesy Lemmings over incredibly zany and complex obstacles to capture the enemy flag. Sounds simple, but it's far from easy.

A Case of the Creeps

Adventure has traditionally been a swords-and-sorcery or sci-fi genre, but no more. City dwellers and Kafka fans alike will probably want to check out Pulse Enter-tainment's Bad Mojo, where you assume the identity of a cockroach trying to survive in the nasty habitat of an apartment. (Be forewarned: You'll never look at a bait trap the same way again.)

Horror fans will also find plenty of spine-tingling chills on disc. Gabriel Knight 2: The Beast Within and Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle of Flesh, both from Sierra On-Line, pull out all the stops in the scare department—they're sure to make even your hard drive scream. Fans of Virgin Interactive's creepy 7th Guest are sure to love the sequel, The 11th Hour, which puts even more macabre puzzles in your way. Inscape's Drowned God: Conspiracy of the Ages, meanwhile, is a conspiracy theorist's dream come true and links together alien abduction, Atlantis, Stonehenge, the disappearance of the Mayan civilization, and of course, the inevitable government cover-up.

Bad Mojo

The 11th Hour

If you yearn for more traditional swords-and-sorcery adventure, Diablo from Blizzard Entertainment, Mindscape's Dark Earth, and Bethesda Softworks' The Elder Scrolls: Daggerfall all combine 3-D animation and real-time fighting in quests for treasure, fame, and redemption. Finally, the musicians from another dimension, also known as The Residents, have a CD that will definitely twist your melon. Bad Day at the Midway from Inscape is a freaky adventure in a carnival setting with literary touches that fall somewhere between Edgar Allan Poe and Jack Kerouac.

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail

For Something Completely Different

Gamers looking for more esoteric titillation might want to try their hand at 7th Level's Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail. Inspired lunacy is the name of the game here, with new audio clips from the Python gang, extensive video clips from the movie, never-before-seen outtakes, and insipidly hilarious games like Spank the Virgin. If you merely want to test your smarts, Berkeley Systems' You Don't Know Jack should fit the bill. This hysterical slap at trivia game shows comes with a wisecracking emcee and a wide assortment of irreverent questions. Whatever your tastes, you will find plenty of games to test both your reflexes and your mind.

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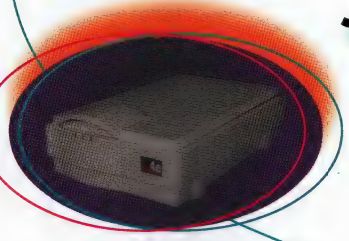

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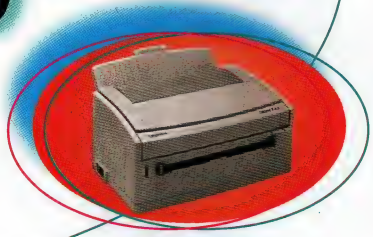

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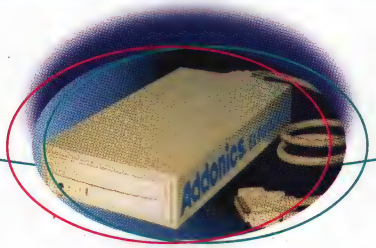

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Holiday Issue

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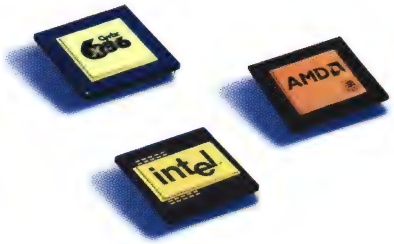

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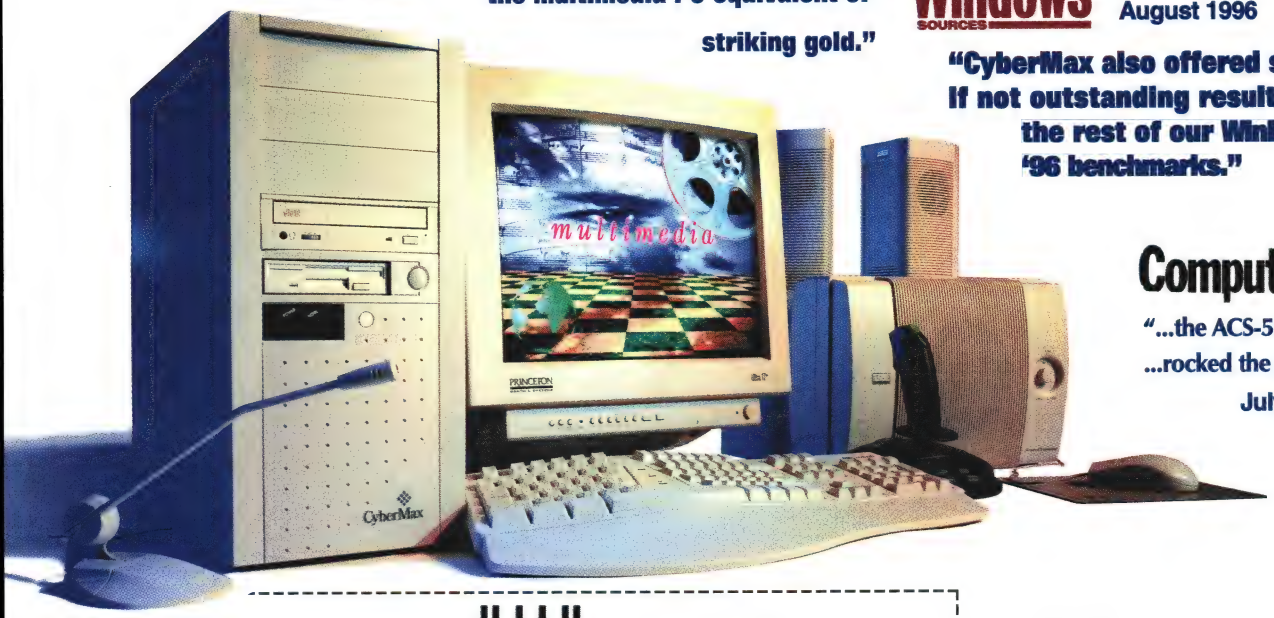

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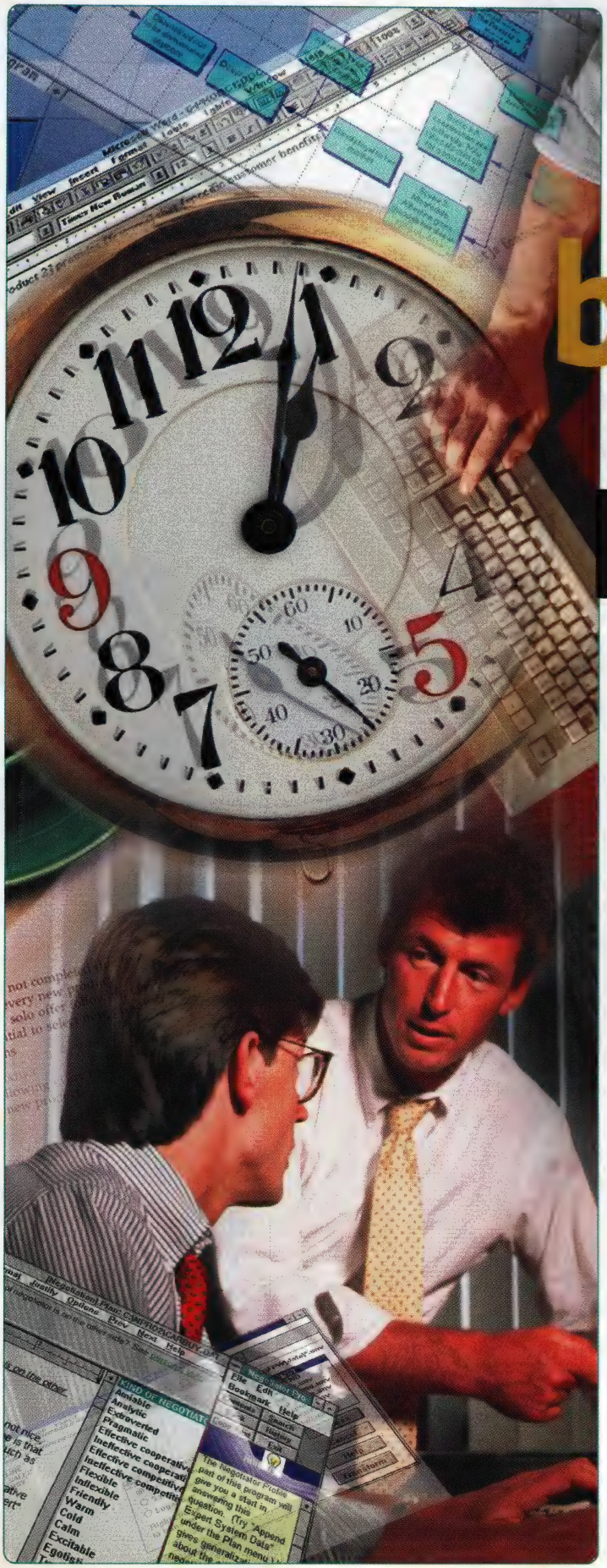


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID KAHL

the best business partners

Choosing the right business software can be the key to a successful home office.

If you're setting up a home office, one of the most important decisions you'll make involves your choice of business software. You can live with shelves that may be slightly tilted and even with a computer that's a little slower than you'd like. However, if your accounting software can't produce the kinds of invoices you need or doesn't let you set up your customer records for the tracking you require, you're going to find yourself spending more software dollars than your budget allows. So plan carefully and take encouragement in the knowledge that small-business software has matured dramatically in the last few years—with the cost of some products experiencing an equally dramatic reduction.

The building blocks of most businesses are the bread-and-butter applications of the software world: word processors, databases, and spreadsheets. If you're in a business that requires regular computer-based presentations, you'll also want a presentation manager for creating professional-quality graphics presentations, perhaps even multimedia demonstrations.

(continued on page 244)

BY KATHY YAKAL

UTILITIES

restore, rescue, and repair

Smart users know that a little PC prevention can go a long way.

BY DAVID HASKIN

We all need some help from time to time, and that goes for our computers as well. In fact, you'll find a wide range of PC assistance offered by today's utility programs—tools that let you perform such varied tasks as recovering lost data, catching and quashing computer viruses, converting one application's data files for use with another, and day-to-day troubleshooting and file management. Although you'll use most utilities on an occasional rather than regular basis, they can be invaluable in emergencies.

Antivirus utilities are exceptions to the occasional-use rule: With virus outbreaks increasing—especially fast-spreading macro viruses that can hide in word processing documents or spreadsheets—protecting your system and data from these insidious bugs should be a full-time priority. Fortunately, there are many effective antivirus programs to choose from, all offering regular online updates to combat newly discovered strains.

S&S Software's Dr. Solomon's Anti-Virus Toolkit (about $125), for instance, can detect and remove approximately 8,000 known viruses. Other popular offerings include Symantec's Norton AntiVirus (about $80), IBM AntiVirus (about $49), TouchStone Software's PC-cillin 95 (about $50), and McAfee Associates' VirusScan for Windows 95 ($65; a shareware version is available from *http://www.mcafee.com*).

Backup and Takeoff

Backup utilities also merit use on a regular basis. These programs copy your documents and applications to tape or cartridge drives, providing quick recovery of your data in the event of a hard disk crash or other failure. (Backing up to floppy disks is no longer practical in this age of 2GB hard drives.)

A good backup utility compresses files, speeding the backup process and reducing the number of tapes or cartridges required, and lets you schedule unattended, automatic backups. Most backup hardware products come with software more suitable than the bare-bones utility included with Windows 95; reliable third-party utilities include Seagate Backup (about $99) and Cheyenne Backup 2.0 (about $79).

Uninstallers, such as Quarterdeck's CleanSweep 95 and Vertisoft Systems' Remove-It 95 3.0 (each about $40), perform precisely the opposite task: They systematically remove programs and files from your system. This category of utilities has become hugely popular in recent years, due to applications' increasing complexity and habit of dispersing files in many places instead of in a single directory of a PC's hard drive. Uninstallers help conserve disk space and keep Windows from slowing down.

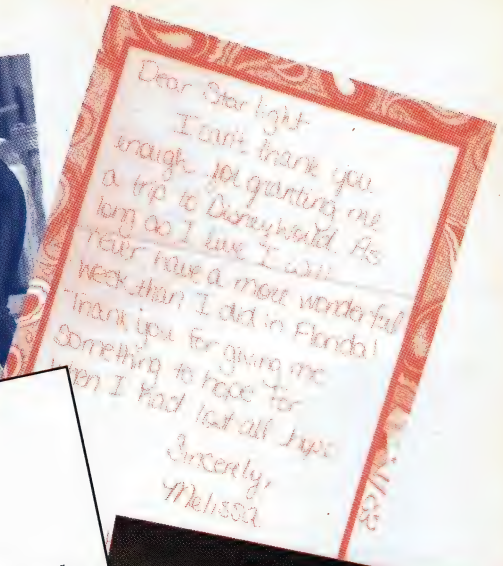
The Healthy PC

One way to assure optimal performance and prevent data disaster is to employ a data- and system-integrity toolkit. The best-known is Symantec's Norton Utilities (about $119), famous for its ability to recover accidentally deleted files and for other aids such as Norton Disk Doctor, which can fix file-system flaws before they lead to data loss.

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC YANG

Starlight Foundation International

Starlight Foundation International offers *revenue-generating* programs for its corporate sponsors.



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long as I live I will
never have a more wonderful
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Thank you for giving me
something to hope for
when I had lost all hope
Sincerely,
Melissa

JORDACHE

Dear Corporate Colleague:

Jordache, Inc.'s family became aligned with the Starlight Foundation last year during our launch of the "A Good Pair...Makes Great Things Happen" promotion. The results from this cause-related marketing promotion have far surpassed our expectations!

We combined this promotion with a donation to this wonderful children's charity that truly makes a difference in the lives of seriously ill children.

The celebrity-driven advertisement theme included, among others, these unique pairs:

- Alan Thicke (*Hope and Gloria*) and wife, Gina Toleson
- Kellie Williams (*Family Matters*) and Meschak Taylor (*Dave's World*)
- Sarah Chalke and Michael Fishman (sister/brother duo in *Roseanne*)
- Leigh Taylor-Young (*Picket Fences*) and friend, Dave Mason (musician)

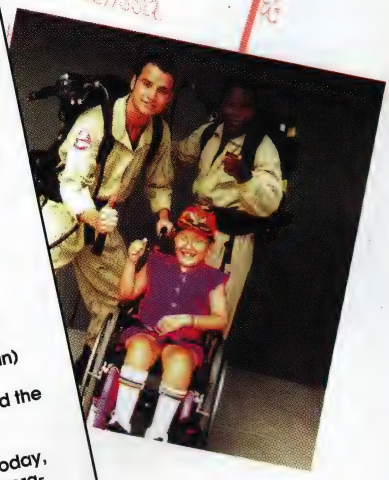
The campaign's goal was to heighten the awareness of Jordache, Inc. and the Starlight Foundation, and to make a difference — one pair at a time.

This was a bold step for Jordache. With what is happening in the world today, the time for cause-related advertising campaigns has come! Large corporations can make a difference. We hope Jordache will continue a trend for Starlight, which will encourage other companies to follow.

I invite other companies to join this cause-related Starlight bandwagon. "Pairing up" with this charity has truly assisted us in our market awareness, enhancing our perception in our industry while concurrently helping very special kids.

Sincerely,

Kaaryn Denig
Director of Marketing & Advertising



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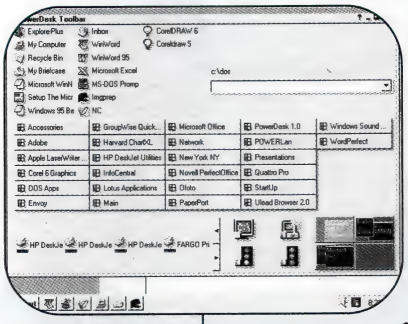
Although even nontechnical users can benefit from system-integrity utilities, system-testing and -reporting tools are more complex. Programs like TouchStone's WinCheckIt (about $50) and CyberMedia's First Aid 95 Deluxe (about $60) examine the innards of your system and report on potential problems; many can pinpoint hardware conflicts and fix (or at least, suggest fixes for) problems.

If you feel Windows 95 is cramping your computing style, a desktop enhancer can help you shore up the environment's weak spots. Symantec's Norton Navigator for Windows 95 (about $99) includes a more flexible, powerful file manager than does either Windows Explorer or My Computer. MicroHelp's PowerDesk (about $50) adds a second Win 95 toolbar that provides single-click access to common functions and to your favorite programs and folders.

If your style is cramped by a too-full hard drive, file-compression utilities can put the squeeze on files so they take up less space. In addition to conserving hard-drive real estate, these utilities make it easier and faster to download and upload files. One type of compression utility, such as Niko Mak Computing's WinZip 6.1 (about $29), lets you compress and uncompress archives of individual files. Another type of compression utility, such as the DriveSpace utility supplied with Windows 95, compresses the entire contents of your hard drive, then expands files on the fly as you need them.

First Aid 95



Power Desk

Miles of Files

What do you do when you find an ancient spreadsheet that contains important information, but your current spreadsheet program can't read it? If you're lucky, you simply call up your file-converter utility, which can translate files created by one program into the format used by another. Good file-conversion programs, such as Word for Word, part of Adobe Systems' Adobe File Utilities package (about $149), support hundreds of formats and also let you convert multiple files at once. Utilities such as Quarterdeck's Hijaak Pro (about $99) are particularly useful for cutting the Gordian knot of graphics-file formats. If you want to swap files with Macintosh users, DataViz's Conversions Plus 3.5 (about $99) can handle the job, although it supports relatively few file types.

A related type of utility, a file viewer, lets you display, browse, and print data files without loading the applications that create them. Windows 95 comes with a limited set of file viewers, but more powerful utilities such as Inso Corp.'s Quick View Plus (about $49) give you access to a far wider variety of files.

As many PC users have learned, sometimes through disastrous experience, it pays to err on the side of caution where important programs and data are concerned. If you live with any operating system long enough, you'll always find some missing pieces or conveniences. But supplementing your OS with the right utilities can keep your PC working smoothly and trouble-free.

Business Software *(continued from page 241)*

How Suite It Is

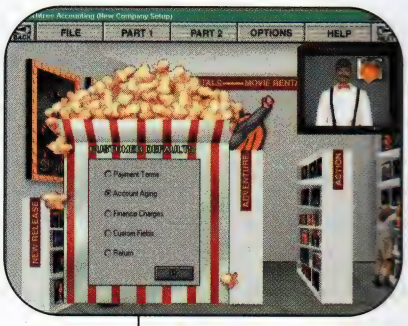
You can buy all these products separately, but if you're going to need more than one, you might want to consider purchasing a software suite. Corel, Lotus, and Microsoft sell such packages, which include various configurations of these and other applications. The most popular all-around integrated suite is Microsoft Office, which includes Microsoft Word, Excel for spreadsheets, and PowerPoint for creating presentations. Access, Microsoft's database, is also included in the Professional version. The newly revamped Corel WordPerfect Suite 7, meanwhile, is centered around the first 32-bit version of WordPerfect for Windows and features new 32-bit versions of Quattro Pro, a spreadsheet program; Presentations, for presentations, of course; an address book; and an assortment of Corel graphics applications.

If you don't need all the power of a suite, you could opt for an integrated software package. These include junior versions of the more powerful flagship applications contained in the suites. Here again, Microsoft has the most popular package, Microsoft Works, with Claris Corp.'s Windows- and Mac-compatible ClarisWorks an alternative choice.

Watching the Bottom Line

Many small businesses flounder because they're not watching their money carefully enough, so it's vitally important

to choose the right financial software. Some home-office managers can get by using a personal finance program. Intuit's Quicken is the most capable in this area. Most users will need an accounting program designed for a small business, though.

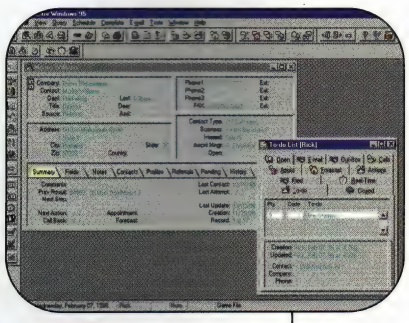


Peachtree Complete Accounting

Beyond simply automating your income/outlay of cash, keeping track of your accounts, and printing documents such as checks and invoices, these products can actually provide valuable management information in the form of reports, graphs, and other vehicles. Peachtree Accounting for Windows excels in the latter function, as well as capably performing all the other tasks required. A recent addition to Peachtree's line, Peachtree Complete Accounting, adds more-sophisticated functionality such as fixed assets and job costing. QuickBooks for Windows is equally worthy of consideration and is perhaps the easiest small-business accounting program currently available.

The Proper PIM

No matter what kind of business you're in, you likely have to keep a calendar and an address book, and document your interaction with vendors and customers. Two types of software can help you with this. Personal information managers (PIMs) let you build calendars and lists of tasks to be done; create business and personal databases of people; and organize random pieces of information. Contact managers, meanwhile, offer similar capabilities but tend to focus more on your contact interaction, offering tools to build thorough histories and reminders of to-do activities for each individual in your database.


GoldMine

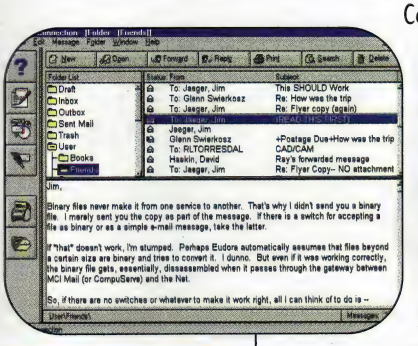
Contact managers are powerful applications for professionals whose success depends largely on how conscientiously they stay in touch with customers. GoldMine Software's GoldMine is widely regarded as the best choice in this area, both in terms of its power and its usability. If your business isn't based on client contacts, but you need to automate your appointment calendar, address book, and reminder list, PIMs such as Day-Timer Organizer Deluxe, Lotus Organizer, and NetManage Ecco Pro may be better choices. Day-Timer mimics the company's popular paper-based planners, while Lotus Organizer provides a simpler solution for people with simpler needs. Ecco Pro provides some pretty sophisticated tools for storing and cross-referencing random information, but mastering the program's structure can be difficult.

Getting Down to Business

These are the powerhouse cornerstones of a small business, but many other software applications can meet your needs nicely. If you require an official business plan, several available programs provide a business-plan framework and help you build your own business strategy. Business Plan Pro from Palo Alto Software is one of the best. Another good choice is Business Resource Software's Business Insight, which can help you develop a marketing strategy for your product or service based on expert input from the program.

Many small businesses flounder because they're not watching their money carefully enough.

If you're planning to send e-mail via America Online, CompuServe, MCI Mail, or the Internet, E-Mail Connection 3.0 from ConnectSoft will provide common ground for sending and receiving files and messages. If you want to use the Internet for viewing onscreen applications, online group meetings, and drawing on a "whiteboard" in real time—and even use your Internet connection for phone conversations—Microsoft NetMeeting is a capable choice. It should be available, by the time you read this, as an add-on to Microsoft Internet Explorer.


E-Mail Connection 3.0

Even the best small-business software can't help you succeed if you're selling a lackluster product or service. But the right selection of business software can help you avert disaster by keeping close tabs on your finances, creating more professional-looking materials and presentations, and making sure you're on schedule and in touch.

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- Upgrade to 32MB EDO DRAM - $99.
- Microsoft® Natural Keyboard - $39.
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- 28.8 Baud Fax/Modem with Voice -
  On 133,120 & 100 systems
- 8 Speed CD ROM Drive
- 16 Bit Sound Card
- Speakers with AC Adaptor
- 9 Bay Tower with 3 Cooling Fans
- *Windows ®95
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- Plug and Play Bios
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- *Intel 133MHz Pentium Processor
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PLUS
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166 Enhanced

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- *Intel 150MHz Pentium Processor
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133 Enhanced

- *Intel 133MHz Pentium Processor
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- *Intel 120MHz Pentium Processor
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- 17" SVGA Monitor - $249.
- 3.2GB Travan Tape Back Up w/1 tape - $199.
- Upgrade to 48MB/64MB EDO DRAM - $99./$199.
- Microsoft® Natural Keyboard - $39.
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- Fax 700 Fax/Copier Value Pack $489

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- 4039 10 Plus $1069
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- Optra R+/OptraRt+ $1249/*1479
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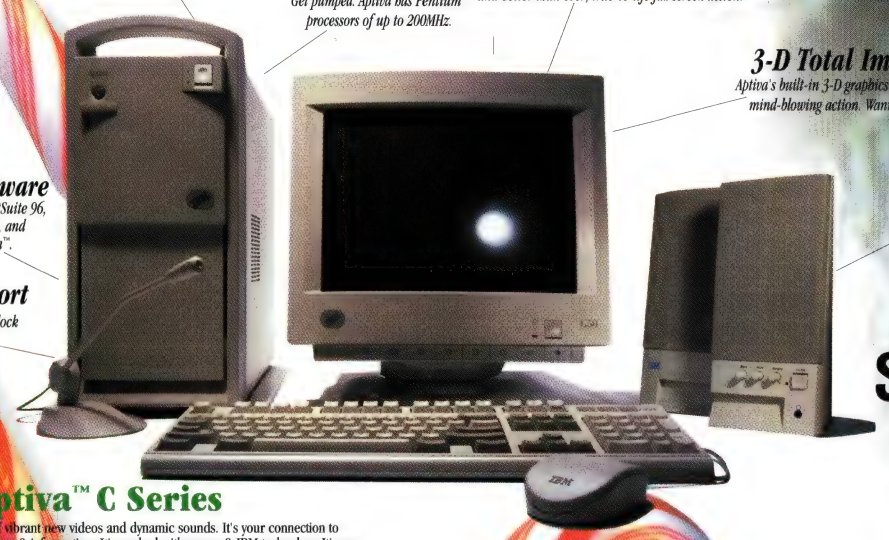

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